The Architectural Review

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Photographs by Cecil Beaton, reproduced by courtesy of Vogue.

Utility and *Haute Couture*

The Board of Trade's utility regulations and their effects on various trades should be closely watched by anybody interested in the æsthetic possibilities of planning and the prospects of Government support for a higher æsthetic standard of design. Utility at present stands for different things in different trades. In some cases nothing but utility goods to stringent specifications are allowed to be made, in others utility amounts only to a profit control. All shades of regulations exist between these two extremes. The Board of Trade has obviously not made up its mind whether or not its job should be to work for more adequate standards of taste in British products. That is a deplorable fact ; for the Board has a gigantic educational opportunity as long as the war and the necessary post-war controls keep the initiative in its hands. And a lesson taught now would without any doubt not be forgotten when private enterprise comes into its own again. The Ministry of Information in its publicity design and the Board of Education in its exhibitions (under the responsibility of CEMA) are doing first-rate work. Why should the Board of Trade stand aside? It could do more immediate good than any of the others. This is clearly proved by the only serious attempt in the right direction it has so far made. And as THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW has criticized the Board's utility furniture debacle as severely as it deserved, the same publicity must be given to the one successful set of Board of Trade utility designs : those for women's clothes. The article below, written by one who has been in the closest touch with the remarkable development of utility clothes, Miss Audrey Withers, Editor of *Vogue*, tells how a few enlightened temporary civil servants, conscious of educational duties and possibilities, got hold of the best available designers—the very thing that the corresponding furniture committee had not succeeded in doing. The excellent results, photographed by Cecil Beaton, are illustrated on the facing page by the courtesy of *Vogue*.

THIS is the Utility Age. The War has brought out this little-used word from its dictionary obscurity and scattered it broadcast through shop windows, the pages of newspapers and everyday conversation. It is applied to furniture and household goods, china and cigarette lighters and also to clothes. A word used so often, in connection with so many of the commonest necessities of life, is bound to sink pretty deep into the public consciousness, but that is not to say that the public has any very clear idea what it means : and, indeed, its meaning varies somewhat according to the commodity to which it is applied.

Briefly, " utility " nowadays always means price regulation ; sometimes it means design regulation also. Sometimes (as in the case of furniture) the whole of the permitted production is utility. Sometimes (as in the case of clothes) only a part—though by far the largest part, about 75 per cent. But while the utility clothes programme is not the most complete, it was the earliest, and it still is in some ways the most interesting and successful of the Board of Trade's utility schemes.

The first Orders governing the production of utility clothing were issued in September, 1941, three months after the introduction of clothes rationing. The first examples of utility clothes were in the shops early in 1942. The scheme would have gained greatly if it had been the result of prior planning. As it was, it had to be put into operation quickly, and adjusted and developed as time went on. Its sole purpose, in those early days, was to ensure a supply of reasonably priced clothing by fixing ceiling prices and establishing definite rates of profit at every stage from the production of the cloth to the finished garment.

In order to get the scheme started without delay it was necessary at first to utilize existing fabrics and style ranges which could be brought within those ceiling prices. Naturally this meant a wide variation in the quality of both fabric and styling. But the Board of Trade soon recognized a responsibility in connection with the quality of utility clothes. They were already rationing clothing—and were soon to cut this ration closer. It was in everybody's interest that clothes should last : the individual would not have the coupons, nor the nation the labour and raw material, to replace them.

The Board's next step, therefore, was to work towards establishing definite qualities in all the various categories of utility fabrics. This was a colossal task, involving months of research into the technical processes of very complex trades, and in the face of constant deterioration in the supply of labour and raw materials.

However, it has been done. Woollens are the most difficult to regiment, because the basic natural fibre is itself liable to wide variations on account of climatic conditions. Even so, a fine and reliable job has been done. A number of categories of woollen utility cloths have been established (and recently sub-divided for further precision) each of which stands for a certain specific weight and quality. If raw wool received is not suitable for weaving a particular category, then that category is simply not made until suitable wool arrives. Added to this, the profit control keeps prices low, so the net result is that the public is bound to get value for its money.

In February of this year the first large-scale results of research into cotton and rayon have been shown in an exhibition of cloths produced according to Board of Trade specifications. Over two thousand samples, covering every type of cotton and rayon, were included in this exhibition. As Sir Raymond Streat, Chairman of the Cotton Board, put it :—" For these utility fabrics there is a ceiling for prices and a floor for quality, but within these limits the skill and taste of the converter and manufacturer has performed a splendid service to the consumer. Here is austerity without monotony, reliability without uniformity."

So much for the Board's efforts to establish maximum standards of fabric quality at minimum prices. What have they done, and what would it be possible to do, to improve style quality ?

This is a question of the greatest social interest and implication. Since mass production became technically possible it has been obvious that it could be the means of making good designs available at low prices, because the original cost of the design would be so thinly spread over the whole output. This is the secret of the excellence of American ready-to-wear clothes : this, and the remarkable sizing system to which they work, and which enables a woman to walk into a department store in any city, go straight to a rack of outfits cut to her measurements, and walk out in the one she chooses. A more co-

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This is a question of the greatest social interest and implication. Since mass production became technically possible it has been obvious that it could be the means of making good designs available at low prices, because the original cost of the design would be so thinly spread over the whole output. This is the secret of the excellence of American ready-to-wear clothes: this, and the remarkable sizing system to which they work, and which enables a woman to walk into a department store in any city, go straight to a rack of outfits cut to her measurements, and walk out in the one she chooses. A more co-

ordinated sizing system is being started up over here, through the British Standards Institution, and is long overdue; for if it had been established before the war, there would have been great saving of fabric, labour, time and money, involved in making the alterations which are usually so necessary in buying ready-made clothes.

On the styling side, the loss of Paris meant a severe loss of fashion inspiration for the wholesale dress trade; for many houses copied Paris models (with adaptations where necessary), while others made their own interpretation of Paris trends. Every firm was thrown on its own designing resources, good, bad, indifferent or non-existent. It was here that the Board of Trade saw an opening for style standards to be raised. They approached the London equivalent of the Paris model houses—the outstanding designers who had recently grouped themselves into the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers—and asked them to design a small collection of coats, suits and dresses suitable for mass production as part of the utility programme. Templates of the chosen designs were to be cut and sold for a few shillings to any maker-up who wished for them.

The designers who took part in this scheme were Molyneux, Creed, Hardy Amies, Digby Morton, Bianca Mosca, Peter Russell, Victor Stiebel and Elspeth Champcommunal of Worth. The models they made, which were chosen to be put into production, are shown in the Cecil Beaton photographs from *Vogue* which accompany this article.

The idea was admirable and greatly to the credit of those at the Board of Trade who conceived it and carried it through, notably Mr. T. M. Heron, supported by the Director-General of Civilian Clothing, Sir Thomas Barlow. Many hundreds of the templates were sold, and many thousands of garments cut from them have been in the shops and made rapid sales. Similar designs are constantly to be seen: so it is true to say that these *couture* models have had far-reaching influence, by setting a standard of simplicity, cut and styling, recognized alike by trade and public. Some such system of harnessing designing talent to the production of ready-to-wear clothing must be adopted, if England is to share in the vast possibilities of the post-war export dress trade; but it seems as if adverse circumstances were too strong to make it likely of repetition under present conditions.

The designers' natural unfamiliarity with mass-production technique; the shortage of skilled labour, which made it impossible to ensure that the designs would be correctly copied; the difficulty of getting large supplies of any particular category of cloth (and the consequent use of other, less suitable, categories); the sniping by people who love to impede progress by representing attempts at raising standards of taste as irrelevant, wasteful and frivolous; and, it must be said, trade jealousies which misrepresented the scheme as an insult to the good wholesale firms rather than as an attempt to help those with inadequate designing staffs; all these things have combined to postpone the application, in England, of *couture* design to the mass market. But the idea is sound, and will one day be developed.

Not that one would ever argue that a dress mass-produced from a *couturier's* design could be as good as the same dress made specially for a customer by the skilled hands of the *couturier's* own workrooms; or that a dress so individually produced could not have many features of beauty and interest denied by the very nature of mass production. All that one argues is that within the limits of mass production technique a remarkable excellence of design can be made cheaply and therefore widely available.

Looking for a moment into a problematical future, it may be pertinent to say that private clients of great wealth are not necessary for the financial support of the top-flight dress designers: if (as was the case in Paris) their models are linked up with the world's dress trade. Given a widespread, reasonably high standard of living there need be no limit to the possibilities of employing first-class designers of clothes, furnishings and indeed everything we wear and use.

The only imponderable factor is the extent to which the development of a dress designer, in particular, depends on the interplay of taste between him and the women of fashion who are dressed by him: their choice, and their rejection of certain styles; the modifications they make; their personal colour sense; the very way in which they wear his clothes, all help to forge a fashion powerful enough to make its way round the world. But even here "money is not everything." Women of taste have more influence than the merely wealthy, and whatever the social and economic structure, there will always be women with an innate sense of *chic*, a flair for clothes, who will strike fashion sparks out of the designers and will give a lead to their contemporaries; and then, too, there will always be the trained professionals of the fashion press and the retail trade, who have huge promotional powers in their hands. So the position of the designer should be honoured and secure, however the distribution of wealth may be modified. But this discussion of how much of the excellence possessed by things made for the few can be kept in things made for the many is aside from the main theme.

To return to the Board of Trade, we have seen that its direct action aimed at raising standards of style, proved short-lived; on the other hand its indirect action, aimed simply at saving fabric and labour, has had a far-reaching and largely beneficial influence on style. This indirect action was the so-called "austerity" regulations. (One must regretfully charge Sir Stafford Cripps with the popularizing and consequent debasement of this fine word.) These regulations, issued last spring, apply to all clothing—utility and non-utility alike. They go into great detail, specifying separately for every type of garment the permitted number of buttons, pleats, tucks, pockets, ornamental stitching and the rest.

Some critics have said that it was quite unnecessary to do more than specify the amount of material that could be put into a given garment, leaving style and detail to be decided by the designer. The Board reply that the aim of the regulations was to save labour at least as much as to save material, and that only by going into every particular could they prevent unnecessary details. In view of the fact that manpower appears to be among the shortest-in-supply of all our commodities (and that the strong sales appeal of "detail" in dress is a constant temptation to designers to out-do their competitors) the Board's argument would seem unanswerable. In fact the dress trade is now regulated in a very similar way to the pottery trade; that is to say it is restricted to a certain number of designs a year, left wide freedom to determine the lines that they shall take but only permitted to ornament them within certain specified limits.

Critics of the "austerity" regulations have also argued that these narrowly defined restrictions hamper design to a serious extent. To that there are two replies. One is, that in every art, even those whose talents would qualify them to make the finest use of freedom often do their best work within narrow limits. A definite verse form, the precise order of a patron, the intractable character of a site—all act as a challenge to poet, painter and architect. The same is true of the lesser arts, such as the art of dress design. Surface restrictions should merely stimulate the designer's skill, compelling him not only to make the best use of what detail is allowed to him, but to seek a firm foundation for his style in the fundamentals of his art—cut, fit, fabric, colour. In point of fact, the good designer of to-day can make one forget the very existence of restrictions.

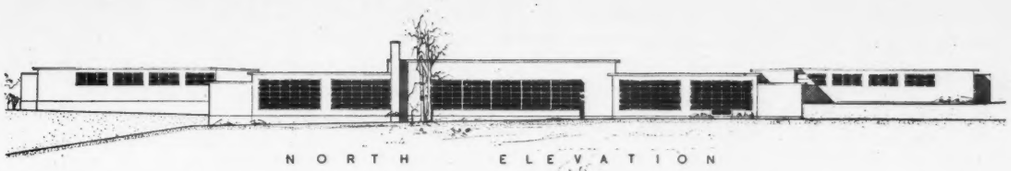
The other reply is this: that the dress restrictions prevent designers of uncertain taste from going as wrong as they could go if given the chance. Simplicity is forced upon them; and a simple thing may be dull, but it can never be glaringly hideous. Englishwomen used to have a weakness for bits and pieces. Just as they loved the twiddly bits in furniture so they loved embroidery, trimmings and meaningless cut-about lines in their clothes. Even when they bought a good dress they all too often cluttered it with odds and ends. They had little of the instinct for leaving well alone; and nor had the firms who catered for them. Well, now restrictions ensure that well and ill alike shall be left alone—and both are the better for it.

It is very pleasant and heartening to know that visiting Americans, over here to investigate our various war-time measures, express special approval of the utility clothing scheme, and comment on the improved appearance of the average Englishwoman.

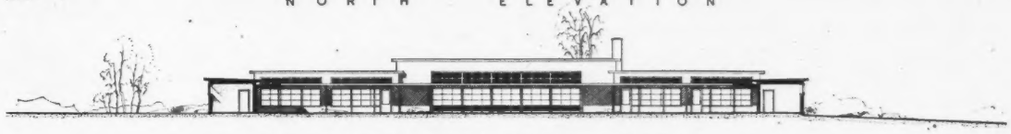
Former opponents of the scheme, in this country, have come round almost to a man, and now admit that utility clothes are as good value as the ones that retailed for about half as much again before the war. And when one understands the workings of the scheme, one realizes that that verdict is inevitable: for the quality floor is fixed, ensuring minimum standards; the price ceiling is fixed, ensuring reasonable prices; and the profit margins have been cut drastically lower than pre-war practice. Naturally the resulting product gives better value for money to the public.

And its good value could and should be carried over into the post-war period. The higher profit margins which will be claimed in normal trading times can be offset in many ways: for example by efficiency in production, by long runs and by voluntary instead of compulsory elimination of merely tiresome detail. It will, indeed, be a strange reflection on our national taste, if the Englishwoman cannot be as well-dressed in peace as she is in war.

AUDREY WITHERS



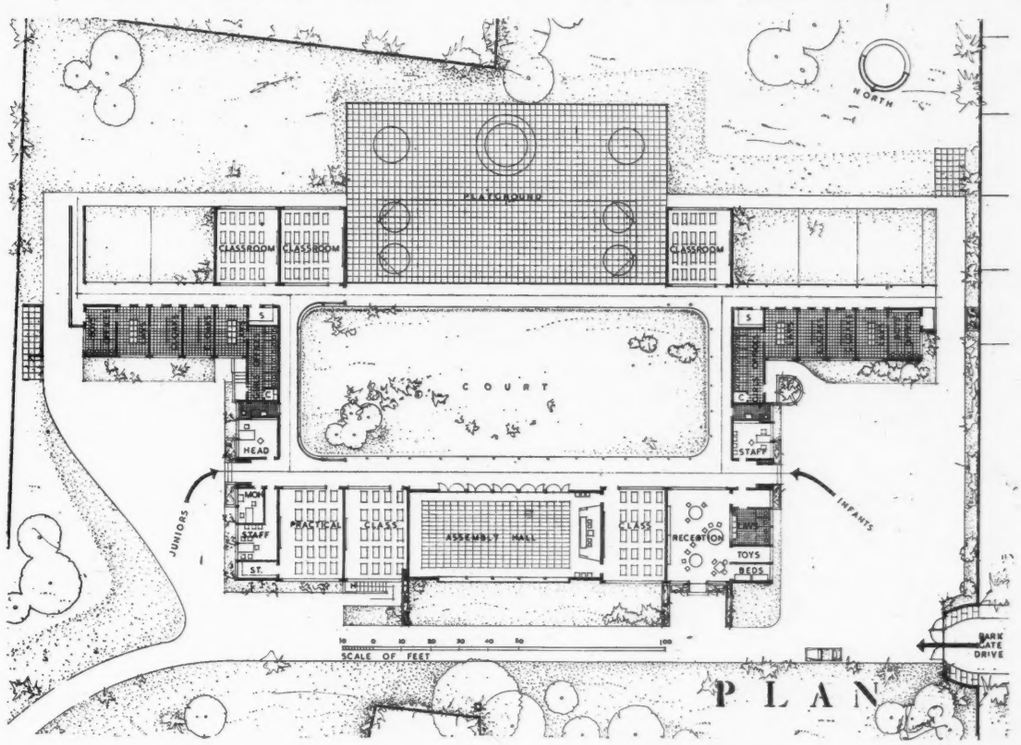
NORTH ELEVATION



SECTION THRO QUADRANGLE

WEST ELEVATION

SECTION THRO HALL



SCHOOL IN LANCASHIRE

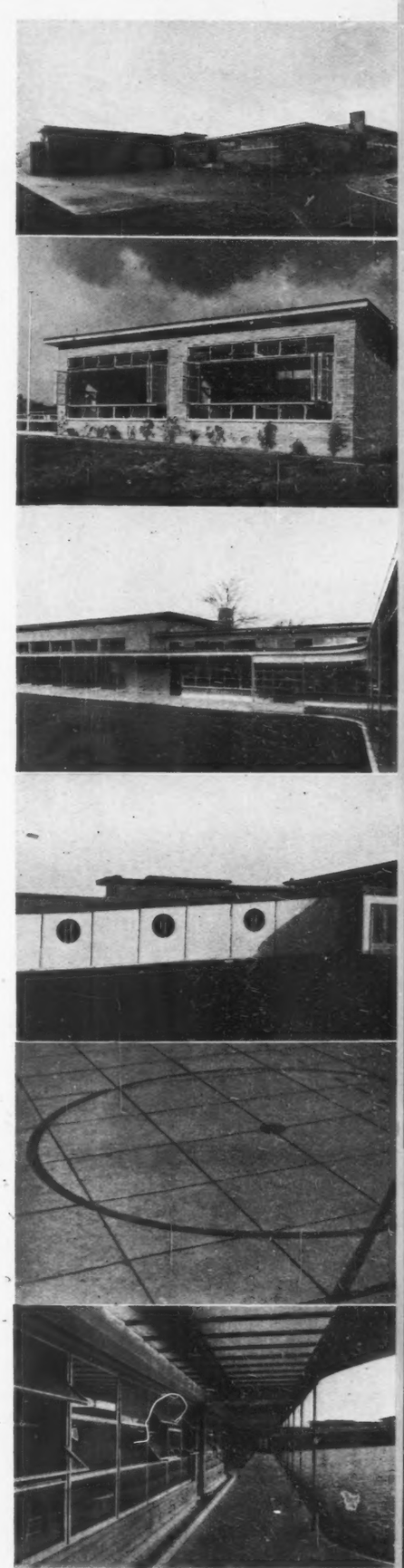
Hubert Bennett

GENERAL—This school in an industrial area of Lancashire accommodates at present 340 children, from three to eleven years of age, 40 attending the nursery, 100 infant and 200 junior classes. Future extension has been budgeted for.

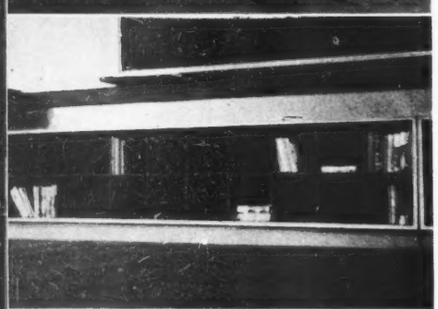
PLANNING—The scheme provides for a single-storey building with an assembly hall, quadrangle and paved play-space. The remainder of the accommodation is contained on either side of this centre, approximately to the east and west. To the west lies the infant section, housing the nursery reception suite, staff room, two classrooms, toilets, lavatories and cloaks. The junior section on the east has four classrooms, headmaster's room, staff room, medical room, toilets, lavatories, cloaks, stores, etc.

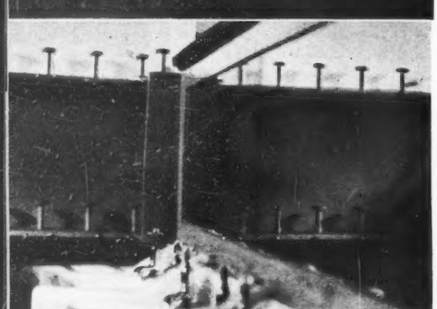
Each section of the school has direct access to the assembly hall and the various play-spaces. Circulation is provided by means of a covered way along three sides of the court and the south side of the two wings.

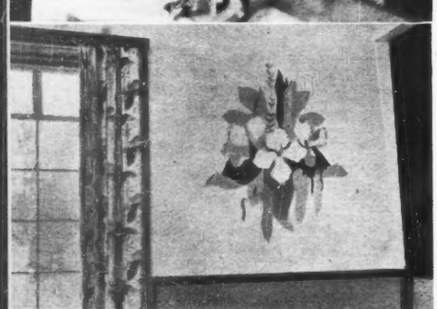
As the ground slopes away to the east, where the junior toilets and cloaks are, a garden store with water supply, cupboards, etc., and A.R.P. accommodation for a hundred scholars is placed beneath the south-east

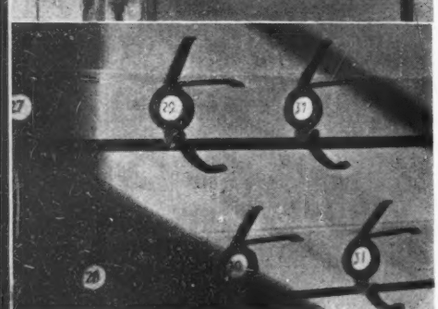


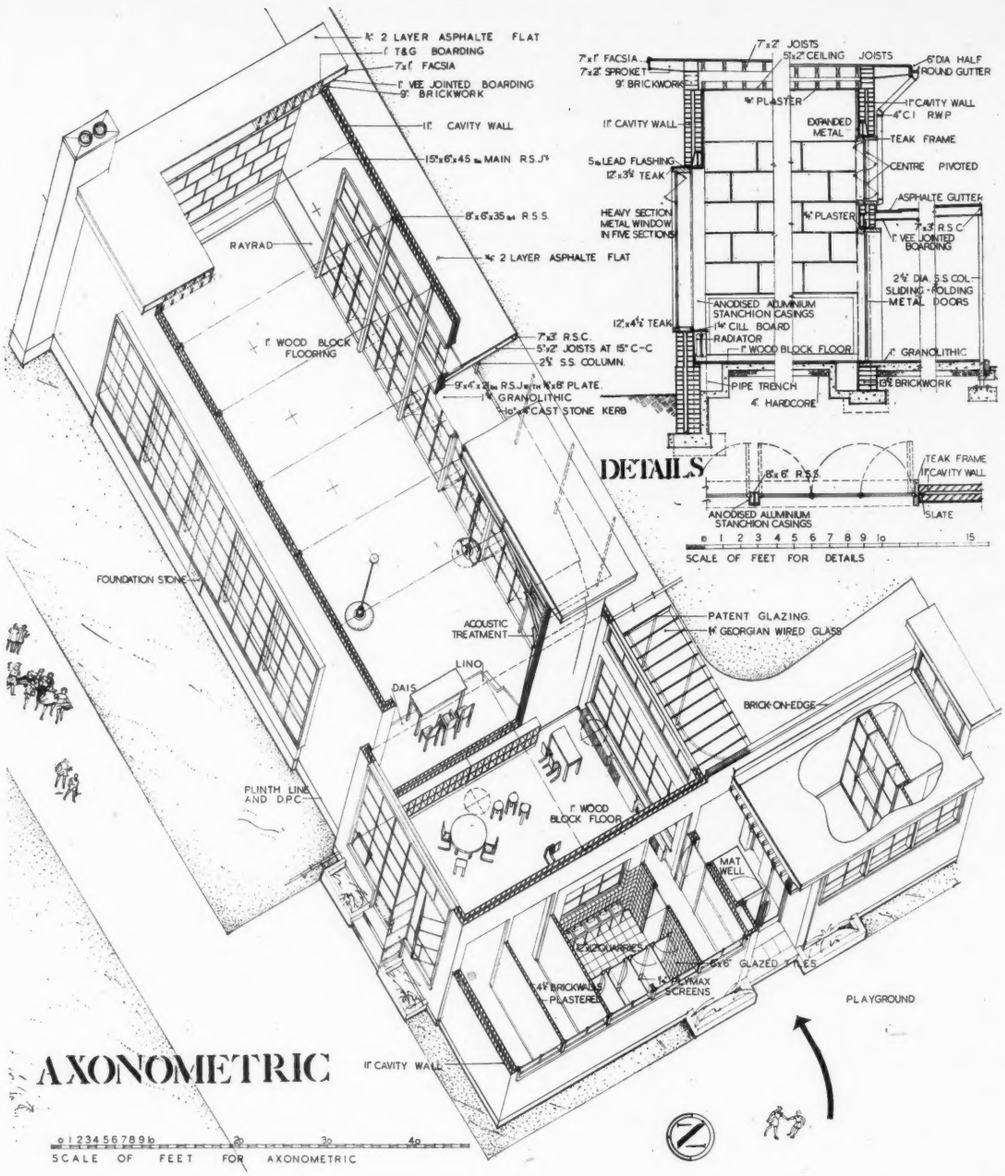
The pictures on this page from top to bottom : north view—south-east classroom block—quadrangle towards north—ramp to the junior school (screened from westerly winds)—detail from the playground —quadrangle cloisters with terrazzo flower troughs in front of the classroom windows.











wing. Shelters for two hundred more scholars are placed in the school grounds.

FITTINGS AND FINISHES—The assembly hall has Rhodesian teak block-floor, and walls plastered and painted off-white. The wall behind the dais is faced bird's-eye maple veneer with a dull clear French polish. The Coat of Arms of the Borough, designed in various veneers, is centrally placed on this wall. All other woodwork to dado rails, panel surrounds, window surrounds, skirtings, etc., is in teak, French polished. Part of the rear wall is, for reasons of acoustics, covered with fibre panels over which a maroon coloured fabric is stretched out.

The stanchions to the north side of the hall have a blue-green cellulose finish. Below the large window to this side the dado is faced with pale blue tiles. The curtains are a five-colour screen-printed cotton fabric, with an off-white ground and a maroon, yellow-green, tyrian, chalk-blue and fawn pattern. Four mural compositions of leaves and flowers are introduced into the room. They have similar forms and colours as those used in the fabric. Fabric and murals were designed by Louise Aldred Bennett. In the junior part of the school, one of the larger classrooms is provided with a fitted store, sink and drainers. The infants' classroom adjacent to the assembly hall has specially designed cupboards and bookcases, and exhibition space on all walls.

A detail of special interest are the hat and coat hooks with removable ivorine centres, the numerals being coloured vermilion. Hardwood beaker holders and chromium-plated towel and toothbrush fittings are provided to the nursery and infants' sections.

MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION—The weight-bearing brick walls are faced externally with a rough textured brown brick. In the construction of the assembly hall, free standing stanchions covered with cellulosed metal linings are used. The roofs are timber, insulated and asphalte covered, all fascias being hardwood. The classrooms are divided with 9 in. brick walls carrying the roof loads and enabling both sides of all principal rooms to be glazed.

The pictures on this page from top to bottom: assembly hall—infants' reception room—library shelves—beaker holders—mural composition by Louise A. Bennett in the assembly hall—hat and coat hooks with vermilion numerals on an ivory ground.

The following is a documentary of the first twenty years of tenement house building for the working classes of London. As plenty of original evidence on a topic so much discussed at the time is still in existence, and as most of this evidence is buried in old volumes of architectural magazines, the compiler of the article has confined himself almost entirely to quotations from contemporary sources.

The story which thus takes shape for the first time is one of equal historical and topical interest. Historically it introduces a number of buildings so completely forgotten that scarcely anybody nowadays knows of their existence or where to find them. Yet they are—especially the examples of about 1850—by no means devoid of architectural merit, and certainly possess an exceptionally high social significance. As for their topical importance, it lies in a development which over the twenty years here examined made of pleasant moderately-sized dwelling-houses the grim and grimy barracks of the poor which between the sixties and the eighties succeeded in destroying any chance for the block of flats to become popular in England with the class for which they could be such a blessing.

Model Houses for the Labouring Classes

Compiled by Nikolaus Pevsner

THE FRONT ATTIC.

ON THE TWO-PAIR FLOOR

ON THE ONE-PAIR FLOOR.

ON THE GROUND FLOOR.

The slums of 1850, *Charlotte Place, Gray's Inn Road. From* The Builder, *vol.* 11.

THE SLUMS OF A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The first five quotations are taken from the Report to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department from the Poor Law Commissioners, on an Inquiry into the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain. It was written in 1842 *by the secretary to the investigating committee, the great Edwin Chadwick, and based on evidence given by Dr. Neil Arnott, James Phillips Kay, Dr. Southwood Smith, and others. It is the foundation of all slum clearance and re-housing endeavours.*

THE SLUMS OF GLASGOW (DR. ARNOTT)

"We entered a dirty low passage like a house door, which led from the street through the first house to a square court immediately behind, which court, with the exception of a narrow path around it leading to another long passage through a second house, was occupied entirely as a dung receptacle of the most disgusting kind. Beyond this court the second passage led to a second square court, occupied in the same way by its dunghill; and from this court there was yet a third passage leading to a third court, and third dung heap. There were no privies or drains there, and the dung heaps received all filth which the swarm of wretched inhabitants could give; and we learnt that a considerable part of the rent of the houses was paid by the produce of the dung heaps. Thus, worse off than wild animals, many of which withdraw to a distance and conceal their odure, the dwellers in these courts had converted their shame into a kind of money by which their lodging was to be paid. The interior of these houses and their inmates corresponded with the exteriors. We saw half-dressed wretches crowding together to be warm; and in one bed, although in the middle of the day, several women were imprisoned under a blanket, because as many others who had on their backs all the articles of dress that belonged to the party were then out of doors in the streets. This picture is so shocking that, without ocular proof, one would be disposed to doubt the possibility of the facts; and yet there is perhaps no old town in Europe that does not furnish parallel examples."

SEWERAGE AT LEEDS (MR. BAKER)

"Numbers of streets have been formed and houses erected without pavement, and hence without surface drainage—without sewers—or if under drainage can be called sewers, then with such as, becoming choked in a few months, are even worse than if they were altogether without. The surface of these streets is considerably elevated by accumulated ashes and filth, untouched by any scavenger; they form nuclei of disease exhaled from a thousand sources. Here and there stagnant water, and channels so offensive that they have been declared unbearable, lie under the doorways of the uncomplaining poor; and privies so laden with ashes and excrementitious matter as to be unusable prevail, till the streets themselves become offensive from deposits of this description."

SEWERAGE IN THE PARISH OF ST. GILES (MR. HOWELL)

"I would instance a recent case in my own parish, where I was called to survey two houses about to undergo extensive repairs. It was necessary that my survey should extend from the garrets to the cellars; upon visiting the latter, I found the whole area of the cellars of both houses were full of night-soil, to the depth of three feet, which had been permitted to accumulate from the overflow of the cesspools; upon being moved, the stench was intolerable, and no doubt the neighbourhood must have been more or less infected by it. I should mention that these houses are letting at from £30 to £40 a year each, and are situated in a considerable public thoroughfare."

OVERCROWDING AT HULL, LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER (MR. RIDDALL WOOD)

"In Hull I have met with cases somewhat similar. A mother, about fifty years of age, and her son, I should think twenty-five, at all events above twenty-one, sleeping in the same bed, and a lodger in the same room. I have two or three instances in Hull, in which a mother was sleeping with her grown-up son, and in most cases there were other persons sleeping in the same room, in another bed. In a cellar in Liverpool, I found a mother, and her grown-up daughters sleeping on a bed of chaff on the ground in one corner of the cellar, and in the other corner three sailors had their bed. I have met with upwards of forty people sleeping in the same room, married and single, including, of course, children and several young adult persons of either sex. In Manchester I could enumerate a variety of instances in which I found such promiscuous mixture of the sexes in sleeping-rooms. I may mention one; a man, his wife and child sleeping in one bed; in another bed, two grown-up females; and, in the same room, two young men, unmarried. I have met with instances of a man, his wife, and his wife's sister, sleeping in the same bed together. I have known at least half-a-dozen cases in Manchester, in which that has been regularly practised, the unmarried sister being an adult."

A MANCHESTER LODGING HOUSE (DR. HOWARD)

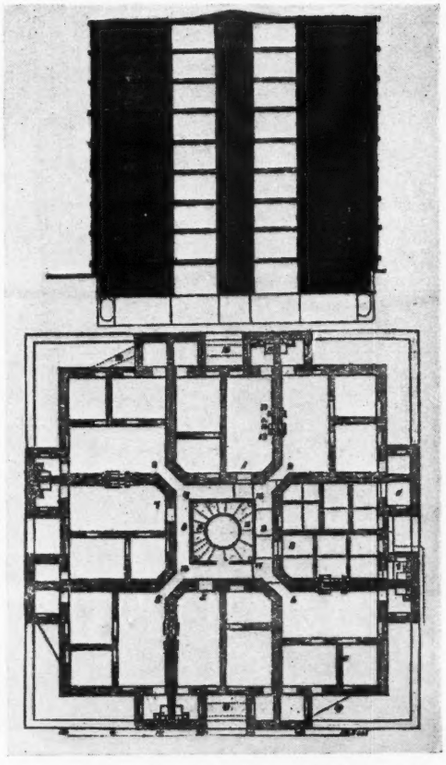
"In some of these houses as many as six or eight beds are contained in a single room; in others, where the rooms are smaller, the number is necessarily less; but it seems to be the invariable practice . . . to cram as many beds into each room as it can possibly be made to hold, and they are often placed so close to each other that there is scarcely room to pass between them. The scene which these places present at night is one of the most lamentable description; the crowded state of the beds, filled promiscuously with men, women and children; the floor covered over with the filthy and ragged clothes they have just put off; and with their various bundles and packages, containing all the property they possess, mark the depraved and blunted state of their feelings, and the moral and social order which exists. The suffocating stench and heat of the atmosphere are almost intolerable to a person coming from the open air, and plainly indicate its insalubrity. Even if the place be inspected during the day, the state of things is not much better. Several persons will very commonly be found in bed; one is probably sick, a second is perhaps sleeping away the effects of the previous night's debauch, while another is possibly dozing away his time because he has no employment, or is taking his rest now because he obtains his living by some night work. In consequence of this occupation of the room during the day, the windows are kept constantly closed, ventilation is entirely neglected, and the vitiated atmosphere is ever ready to communicate its poisonous influence to the first fresh comer whom habit has not yet rendered insensible to its effects."

THREE PLANNERS AHEAD OF THEIR TIME

J. C. LOUDON, 1818

"It is singular that so long ago as 1818, I contrived a college [for working men] . . . and made out a plan and elevation, which I showed at the time to the late Sir Joseph Banks. . . . I have now looked out the plan, and I send it you exactly as it was prepared. . . . The college was to have seven stories, exclusive of a sunk story and enclosed flat roof. Each story contains 8 dwellings, marked 1 to 8, with a gallery and inclined plane in the centre, marked 9 and 10. The side of the square containing the gallery and inclined plane, is 20 feet. All the walls and partitions are to be of brick, and all the floors of Arbroath pavement, resting on the walls, or on cast-iron rafters . . . 12, 12 are the two steam tubes for supplying heat to the air, and steam to the cooking and washing apparatus at 13. . . . In one of the light closets of each dwelling is a water-closet (15, dwelling 1), a sink-stone (16), and a supply-cistern over. 17, 17 in the inclined plane are tubes for the descent of heavy refuse. . . 18, 18 steam tubes for heating the air of the central well, by which means . . . it may be used as a drying room; each family having two or three lines across the inclined plane allowed to them."

From a letter to the editor of the Mechanics' Magazine, *vol. 16, 1831-32. The writer is J. C. Loudon, the famous author of many handbooks on building and gardening. His Encyclopædia has often been quoted in the pages of* THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.



J. C. Loudon: College for Working Men, projected in 1818, *and published in the* Mechanics' Magazine

JUNIUS REDIVIVUS, 1831

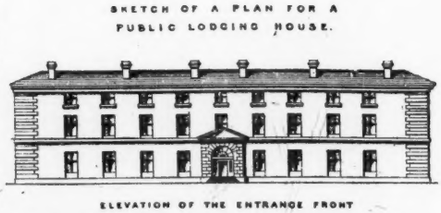
". . . To erect small houses for the residence of the poor is bad, because there is so much multiplication of expenses. . . . The combination of a number of dwellings under one roof diminishes the total expense. . . In a large city the want of room renders it necessary to pile as many stories as possible one on the other; and if the erection be well constructed there is no objection to it . . . [Nor can it] be doubted that a capitalist, building for the poor on a large scale, could afford them every comfort at a . . . cheap rate, and secure himself seven and a-half per cent. without difficulty. . . . Nine feet would probably be ample height for rooms of 15 feet square. For, say, 400 families, 800 rooms would be required, giving a bedroom and a sitting-room for each. The best form of building would probably be a hollow square, . . . fireproof by means of . . . cast-iron. The bedrooms should all be in the outer side of the building . . . the access to them being through the sitting-room, which should look into the interior of the square . . . The length of each side of the building would be about 350 feet. At each angle there should be a staircase; and the access to the rooms should be by galleries, 10 feet wide round each story, after the manner of the old-fashioned inns . . . two stories would contain the whole number of apartments."

Letter from Junius Redivivus to the editor of the Mechanics' Magazine, *vol. 16, 1831-32, published a few months before Loudon's letter. Junius Redivivus was Mr. William Bridges Adams* (1797-1872), *a railway engineer and public writer of pamphlets. The inner courtyard of his building was to be 262 feet square. Each wing would have a kitchen to sell cooked provisions to the tenants, hot baths and laundries. In the centre of the square a three-storied building with school, nursery school, and library accommodation was planned—probably the first suggestion of an arrangement of so decidedly twentieth century in character.*

SYDNEY SMIRKE, 1834

"Portions of unoccupied ground should be taken in the skirts of the town (such, for example, as the waste land beyond Vauxhall Road, the open fields west of the Edgware Road, those behind Euston Square, or other similar spots), and let a village, expressly dedicated to the working classes, be there erected. The avenues should be so laid out, as to be wide, clear and regular; and every means that ingenuity can devise for securing cleanliness and airiness should be adopted. The houses should be arranged and constructed on a plan totally differing in every respect from the small, close, inconvenient tenements usually let out into lodgings. . . . Except in the boarded floors, timber might be entirely discarded in the construction of the houses. . . . The roofs and floors should be supported by iron or brick, and even the window sashes and frames might be advantageously made of the same material. . . . A perfect system of drainage should be adopted throughout, and an abundance of water supplied to each floor. . . . Mr. Brunel has suggested to the author the practicability of laying on heat to a long range of these dwellings from one common source. . . . Nor should we forget to provide for the inmates of these groups of dwellings some open place for recreation, where healthy exercises and the innocent pleasures of society might be enjoyed during the hours of leisure. . . . The ground should be purchased by the public money . . . and a commission or some such permanent Board . . . should assume the whole direction and superintendence of the works. If the requisite sum for the completion of this project be advanced by way of a loan, and entrusted to the management of the Board, there is every reason to hope that, even supposing these tenements to be let at the rate far lower than the usual rent, . . . an income would arise quite sufficient to pay a reasonable interest on the money expended . . ."

From Sydney Smirke's Suggestions for the Architectural Improvement of the Western Part of London, 1834. *Sydney Smirke* (1799-1877), *Sir Robert Smirke's less known but more interesting brother, was the designer of the Carlton Club, the Inner Temple Hall, Burlington House, Knowsley near Liverpool, and the Reading Room of the British Museum with its furniture. The elevation illustrated is from the Chadwick Report. It shows a model lodging-house, not a tenement house, but it indicates the architectural character that Smirke wished to give to working-class buildings, and obviously influenced Henry Roberts* (*see page* 123).



Sydney Smirke: Design for a Lodging House, 1834

SOCIAL REFORMERS—COMMUNIST AND LIBERAL

Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx's friend and staunchest follower, made use of the Chadwick Report to proclaim a fervent indictment of contemporary society, but he knows of no immediately applicable remedies. Chadwick himself, on the other hand, more concerned with alleviating the miseries that surrounded him than with altering the state of society, appeals to the wealthy and cultured for charitable help. His course, not Engels's, was at first followed.

" The great towns are chiefly inhabited by working-people, since in the last case there is one bourgeois for two workers, often for three, here and there for four; these workers have no property whatsoever of their own, and live wholly upon wages, which usually go from hand to mouth. Society, composed wholly of atoms, does not trouble itself about them; leaves them to care for themselves and their families, yet supplies them no means of doing this in an efficient and permanent manner. Every working man, even the best, is therefore constantly exposed to loss of work and food, that is to death by starvation, and many finish in this way. The dwellings of the workers are everywhere badly planned, badly built, and kept in the worst condition, badly ventilated, damp, and unwholesome. The inhabitants are confined to the smallest possible space, and at least one family usually sleeps in one room. The interior arrangement of the dwellings is poverty-stricken in various degrees, down to the utter absence of even the most necessary furniture. The clothing of the workers, too, is generally scanty, and that of great multitudes is in rags. . . . Thus the working-class of the great cities offers a graduated scale of conditions of life, in the best cases a temporarily endurable existence for hard work and good wages, good or endurable, that is, from the worker's standpoint, in the worst cases, bitter want, reaching even homelessness and death by starvation. The average is much nearer the worst case than the last."

From Friedrich Engels's The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844.

Friedrich Engels

" It would have been matter of sincere congratulation to have met with more extensive evidence of spontaneous improvement amongst the classes in receipt of high wages, but nearly all the beneficial changes found in progress throughout the country are changes that have arisen from the efforts of persons of the superior classes. . . . In the rural districts, the worst of the new cottages are those erected on the borders of commons by the labourers themselves. In the manufacturing districts, the tenements erected by building clubs and by speculating builders of the class of workmen, are frequently the subject of complaint as being the least substantial and the most destitute of proper accommodation. The only conspicuous instances of improved residences of the labouring classes found in the rural districts are those which have been erected by opulent and benevolent landlords for the accommodation of the labourers on their own estates; and in the manufacturing districts, those erected by wealthy manufacturers for the accommodation of their own work-people."

" My belief is that, without ultimate pecuniary loss, and with the utmost direct and indirect benefit, buildings, placed under some public control, might be erected for the joint occupation of many families or individuals, and so arranged that each tenant might feel that he had the exclusive enjoyment of a home in the room or rooms which he occupied; and yet might partake, in common with his neighbours, of many important comforts and advantages now utterly unknown to him. I propose that there should be erected buildings, in various parts of the suburbs, consisting of perhaps fifty or sixty rooms, high, airy, dry, well ventilated, light and warm, comfortably filled up, fire-proof, abundantly supplied with water and thoroughly drained; such regulations might be laid down for the conduct of the inmates as may be necessary for the common good, without undue rigour or interference with natural and proper feelings of independence. . ."

From Edwin Chadwick's own remarks in the Report of 1842.

Sir Edwin Chadwick

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM ON HIGH

The seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-85) *was the incarnation of the humane spirit of a group of enlightened English noblemen during Queen Victoria's reign. His name is connected with nearly all the endeavours to mitigate the evils of industrialization: The Factory Act of* 1833, *the Chimney Sweeps Act of* 1834, *the Mines Act, the Ragged School Movement, the Children's Employment Commission, the Ten Hours Bill, the Lunacy Acts, and all housing improvements, insisted upon by law or carried out by charitable private enterprise during his life-time. Prince Albert was greatly impressed by Shaftesbury's initiative. His own kind heart and sense of the orderly, well regulated and beautiful answered readily to appeals for encouragement from the societies for the promotion of improved housing.*

Lord Shaftesbury

" On the 22nd of May [1846] we find him at a meeting of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Working Classes, bringing the subject before an influential audience as vividly as it could be brought. 'I do not,' he said, 'speak merely from book; I do not speak merely from the accounts that have been given me; because I have, not only in past years, but during the present year devoted a very considerable number of hours to going over some of the worst localities in various parts of this great Metropolis.' He startled his audience by some of the revelations he made, of rooms 'so foul and so dark that they were exposed to every physical mischief that can beset the human frame'—so foul that when a physician visited them, he was obliged to write his prescription outside the door; of courts and alleys thronged with a dense and most immoral population of every caste and grade of character, but almost every one of them defiled by perpetual habits of intoxication, and living amid riot and blasphemy, noise, tumult and indecency."

From Edwin Hodder: The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., 1886, *vol.* 2, *p.* 160.

Prince Albert

" I feel convinced that the existence [of model houses] will, by degrees, cause a complete change in the domestic comforts of the labouring classes, as it will exhibit to them that with real economy can be continued advantages with which few of them have hitherto been acquainted, whilst it will show to those who possess capital to invest, that they may do so with profit and advantage to themselves, at the same

time that they are dispensing those comforts to which I have alluded, to their poorer brethren. . . . To show how man can help man, notwithstanding the complicated state of civilized society, ought to be the aim of every philanthropic person; but it is more peculiarly the duty of those who, under the blessing of Divine Providence, enjoy station, wealth and education . . ."

Prince Albert at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Improving the Conditions of the Labouring Classes, 18th May, 1848. More about the Society will be found on the next page. The quotation is taken from The Principal Speeches and Addresses of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort, 1862.

THE WRITERS JOIN IN

"They went along till they arrived in Berry Street. It was unpaved; and down the middle a gutter forced its way, every now and then forming pools in the holes with which the street abounded. . . . As they passed, women from their doors tossed household slops of every description into the gutter; they ran into the next pool, which overflowed and stagnated. Heaps of ashes were the stepping-stones. . . . Our friends were not dainty, but even they picked their way, till they got to some steps leading down into a small area, where a person standing would have his head about one foot below the level of the street, and might at the same time, without the least motion of his body, touch the window of the cellar and the damp muddy wall right opposite. You went down one step even from the foul area into the cellar in which a family of human beings lived. It was very dark inside. The window-panes were many of them broken and stuffed with rags, which was reason enough for the dusky light that pervaded the place even at mid-day. After the account I have given of the state of the street, no one can be surprised that on going into the cellar, the smell was so fetid as almost to knock the two men down. Quickly recovering themselves, as those inured to such things do, they began to penetrate the thick darkness of the place, and to see three or four little children rolling on the damp, nay wet, brick floor, through which the stagnant, filthy moisture of the street oozed up; the fireplace was empty and black; the wife sat on her husband's lair, and cried in the dark loneliness."

From Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton, 1848, *Chap.* 6.

Mrs. Gaskell

"And he dashed across the broad roaring thoroughfare of Bridge Street and hurrying almost at a run down Tooley Street, plunged into the wilderness of Bermondsey. He stopped at the end of a miserable blind alley, where a dirty gas-lamp just served to make darkness visible, and show the patched windows and rickety doorways of the crazy houses, whose upper storeys were lost in a brooding cloud of fog; and the pools of stagnant water at our feet; and the huge heap of cinders which filled up the waste end of the alley—a dreary, black formless mound on which two or three spectral dogs prowled up and down after the offal. . . . The house at which we stopped was the last in a row. A group of slatternly people were in the entry. . . . But Downes pushed past unheeding, unlocked a door at the end of the passage, locked it again, and then rushed across the room in chase of two or three rats, who vanished into cracks and holes. And what a room! A low lean-to with wooden walls, without a single article of furniture; and through the broad chinks of the floor shone up as it were ugly glaring eyes, staring at us. They were the reflections of the rushlight in the sewer below. The stench was frightful, the air heavy with pestilence. The first breath I drew made my heart sick, and my stomach turn."

Charles Kingsley: Alton Locke, tailor and poet, 1849, *Chapter* 35. *Kingsley's part in the Christian Socialist Movement of the mid-nineteenth century will be familiar to readers of this compilation.*

Charles Kingsley

"Jo lives—that is to say, Jo has not yet died—in a ruinous place, known to the like of him by the name of Tom-all-Alone's. It is a black, dilapidated street, avoided by all decent people; where the crazy houses were seized upon, when their decay was far advanced, by some bold vagrants who, after establishing their own possession, took to letting them out in lodgings. Now, these tumbling tenements contain by night a swarm of misery. As, on the ruined human wretch, vermin parasites appear, so these ruined shelters have bred a crowd of foul existence that crawls in and out of gaps in walls and boards; and coils itself to sleep, in maggot numbers, where the rain drips in; and comes and goes, fetching and carrying fever.

"Twice lately, there has been a crash and a cloud of dust, like the springing of a mine, in Tom-all-Alone's; and, each time, a house has fallen. These accidents have made a paragraph in the newspapers, and have filled a bed or two in the nearest hospital. The gaps remain, and there are not unpopular lodgings among the rubbish. As several more houses are nearly ready to go, the next crash in Tom-all-Alone's may be expected to be a good one.

"Much mighty speech-making there has been both in and out of Parliament, concerning Tom, and much wrathful disputation how Tom shall be got right. Whether he shall be put into the main road by constables, or by beadles, or by bell-ringing, or by force of figures, or by correct principles of taste, or by high church, or by low church, or by no church; whether he shall be set to slitting trusses of polemical straws with the crooked knife of his mind, or whether he shall be put to stone-breaking instead. In the midst of which dust and noise there is but one thing perfectly clear, to wit, that Tom only may and can, or shall and will, be reclaimed according to somebody's theory, but nobody's practice. And in the hopeful meantime, Tom goes to perdition head foremost in his old determined spirit.

"But he has his revenge. Even the winds are his messengers, and they serve him in these hours of darkness. There is not a drop of Tom's corrupted blood but propagates infection and contagion somewhere. It shall pollute, this very night, the choice stream of a Norman house, and his grace shall not be able to say Nay to the infamous alliance. There is not an atom of Tom's slime, not a cubic inch of any pestilential gas in which he lives, not one obscenity or degradation about him, not an ignorance, not a wickedness, not a brutality of his committing, but shall work its retribution, through every order of society, up to the proudest of the proud, and to the highest of the high."

Charles Dickens: Bleak House, 1853, *Chaps.* 16 *and* 46. *Dickens's fight for better conditions for the working class was a direct outcome of his study of Chadwick's report.*

Charles Dickens

THE FIRST BUILDINGS (1844-1847)

The Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwelling of the Industrious Classes was formed in 1843, *the Society for Improving the Conditions of the Labouring Classes in* 1844. *Their first model buildings date from* 1844. *These are still modelled on the*

example of the traditional terrace-house. The first blocks of working-class flats were, it seems, put up at Birkenhead in 1845. *We are here only concerned with the early development of flats. Experimental model cottages, however, ran parallel, and also model lodging-houses, and public baths and wash-houses.*

On model cottages see Loudon's Encyclopædia, *H. Roberts's book of* 1850, *mentioned in more detail below, and* The Builder, *Vol.* 3, p. 47, 485; 5, p. 40; 6, *p.* 226, 466, *etc. On baths and wash-houses,* The Builder, *Vol.* 3, *p.* 25; 4, *p.* 262; 6, *p.* 490; 7, *p.* 478. *On model lodging-houses see H. Roberts's book of* 1850. *The example which he followed was the Asylum for Destitute Sailors, Dock Street, London Dock, of* 1835. *The first model-lodging-houses of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes were* 76, *Hatton Garden and George Street, Bloomsbury. The Metropolitan Association built one for* 234 *men in* 1848 *in connection with the Albert Family Dwellings (see below).*

["The Metropolitan Association] partakes quite of the commercial character, being a Joint Stock Company, having a capital of £100,000 in 4,000 shares of £25 each, though, at the same time, the interest of the class sought to be benefited is protected by the charter, limiting the dividends at any time to be paid to £5 per cent., any surplus being directed to be applied in extension of the object . . ."

The Builder, *Vol.* 8, 1850, *p.* 589. *Henry Roberts, on whose important role in the campaign for model houses more will be said presently, also believed this to be the only reasonable foundation for building enterprises. Municipal or public utility building was yet a far cry.*

LOWER ROAD, PENTONVILLE

SOCIETY FOR IMPROVING THE DWELLINGS OF THE LABOURING CLASSES.—This society has lately put forth a statement accompanied by an engraved plan of the fifteen houses now in course of erection in the Lower Road, Pentonville. The following extract . . . explains the humane objects they have in view, and the means by which they propose to carry them out: "The committee, feeling that no description or reasoning, however accurate, is likely to make such an impression on the public as an actual experiment, have resolved to build a certain number of houses, as models of the different kinds of dwellings which they would recommend for the labouring classes in populous towns. The buildings are of three different classes and designed to accommodate in the whole twenty families and thirty single persons. Eight of the families are to occupy each an entire house, with a living-room on the ground floor, having an enclosed recess or closet large enough to receive beds for the youths of the family, and two bedrooms on the upper floor. The remaining twelve families are to be distributed in six houses, each family occupying a floor of two rooms, with all requisite conveniences; and as the apartments on the upper floor are to be approached through an outer door distinct from that belonging to the lower floor, their respective occupants will thus be kept entirely separate, and each floor be virtually a distinct dwelling. The centre building on the east side is intended for the accommodation of thirty widows or females of advanced age, each to have a room, with the use of a wash-house common to all."

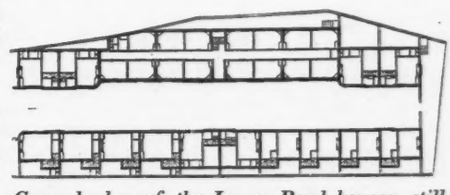
The Builder, *Vol.* 2, 1844, *p.* 630. *The street mentioned is now called Wren Street. The houses are no longer in existence. They were designed by the Society's honorary architect, Henry Roberts.*

Henry Roberts: Model houses, Lower Road, Pentonville 1844-1845

Henry Roberts, the most important working-class architect of the mid-nineteenth century, was born about 1800 *or a little earlier. He died in* 1876. *Before he began to take an interest in building for the poor, he had made a name as the designer of the Fishmongers' Hall by London Bridge* (1831-33), *and the Camberwell Collegiate School* (1835-36). *The Pentonville houses were his first experiment in working-class architecture. He had not then grasped the problems involved, as contemporary critics justly pointed out.*

MODEL (?) HOUSES FOR THE LABOURING CLASSES.—"Anxious to examine the society's first work, . . . we hastened to the site of the new houses. . . . We regret to say . . . that our worst anticipations are confirmed. The arrangement is a disgrace to the society, and cannot surely have been seen by Lord Ashley, the chairman of the committee. . . . These houses, model houses remember, . . . are actually arranged to form a court open at one end only, and less than 23 feet in width at the widest part! The plot of ground, on which the fifteen buildings are crammed is so small, that, notwithstanding this proximity, the yard attached to each house, is literally what its name imparts in fact, or very little more. We call most urgently on the committee and the shareholders to prevent the consummation of this most dangerous mistake, or they will rear a hot-bed for infection, and throw a great impediment in the way of that improvement which they profess to seek."

The Builder, *Vol.* 3, 1845, *p.* 1. *Lord Ashley is, of course, the Earl of Shaftesbury, before he inherited the title in* 1851. *The article is by the editor of* The Builder, *George Godwin* (1815-88), *a man keenly interested in new materials—he submitted an essay on concrete to the Institute of British Architects at the age of twenty—and in new problems, such as* The Architecture of the Poor. *This is the title of a paper which he wrote in* 1843. *In the same year in which he so severely criticized Roberts's cottages, he published the following account of what appears to be the earliest working-class flats ever erected:*



Ground plan of the Lower Road houses, still the old cottage type and still very unsatisfactory. The back yards of the houses are minute, and the alley between the two rows of houses is too narrow.

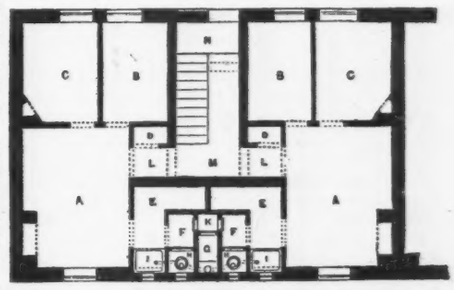
BIRKENHEAD

"The Birkenhead Dock Company have . . . found it better economy to build large houses rather than cottages; they have adopted a plan prepared by Mr. Charles Evans Lang, of London; and the buildings are now in progress. The ground . . . lies between two of eight streets that meet in a circus, and may be described as a triangle; houses are erected in rows, with alleys in between; there is a school-house at the apex of the triangle, and in the centre of the circus a handsome church. Each row [is] a pile four stories high, comprising several distinct houses, each house having a public staircase communicating with the several "flats" or stories; each flat divided into two separate dwelling-places. Each dwelling contains a living-room, two bedrooms, and a scullery."

"The houses built at Birkenhead . . . are of red brick, with light sandstone window-cills and copings. Their external aspect would suggest to a Londoner the idea of a block of buildings constructed for professional persons, . . . and, with little addition and variation of ornament, they might match with the new Hall of Lincoln's Inn. . . . The staircases are of stone, with iron balustrades. The flat brick arches of which the floors are constructed, are tied together with iron ties, and the whole building is fireproof. . . . Each set of rooms is furnished . . . with sinks for washing, and a water-closet, and means of communication with a dust shaft, . . . by which all dust and ashes might be removed at once from the apartments. . . ."

"The rents charged were from 3s. 6d. to 5s. each set. . . . They included a constant supply of water, and the use of one gas burner in each set of rooms, and all rates and taxes, and moreover two iron bedsteads, and a grate with an oven. . . . Mr. Chadwick, who was one of the party, whilst expressing his warm concurrence as to the advance made, stated his opinion that further improvements might yet be achieved, especially in the mode of warming and ventilation. . . . He considered that in such a range of buildings [ventilation] might be accomplished with air that was warm as well as fresh."

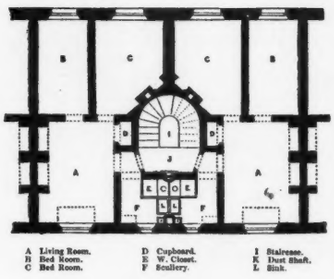
The Builder, *Vol.* 3, 1845, *p.* 220, *and Vol.* 4, 1846, *p.* 537. *The houses were for* 324 *families, an enormous advance in scale over Pentonville. Henry Roberts said about them:*



Charles Evans Lang: Model houses at Birkenhead, 1846, *the earliest large scale scheme* (324 *families*), *and the earliest many-storied blocks of working-class houses.*

"... There is much to commend in this early effort ... but in several important points, there appears to be such great room for amendment ... that I venture to refer to a Report made on them, under date May 1, 1845, and addressed to Lord Ashley. ... The width of the proposed avenues is only 18 feet, whilst the houses are designed to be nearly 40 feet in height. ... The width of such avenues ought to be not less than the height of the buildings or ... at least 30 feet. ... The general arrangement of the houses appears to be good; [but] ... all the rooms are small, particularly those for sleeping."

H. Roberts: The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes, 1850, *p.* 13. *Contemporary with these blocks at Birkenhead, the first were put up at Liverpool (Kent Terrace, see* The Builder, *Vol.* 3, 1845, *p.* 220) *and in Scotland. On the Pilrig Buildings, near Leith Walk, Edinburgh, see* The Builder, *Vol.* 3, 1845, *p.* 29, *and Vol.* 18, *p.* 682. *On the earliest examples in Glasgow, see* The Builder, *Vol.* 5, *p.* 341, *and Vol.* 6, *p.* 505.



EIGHTEEN FORTY-EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN FIFTY

OLD PANCRAS ROAD

METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION FOR IMPROVING THE DWELLINGS OF THE POOR.—"At the first annual meeting of this association ... (it was stated) that an agreement for a lease ... had been entered into for a piece of ground opposite the church in the Old Pancras Road. ... The building ... which the association proposed to erect, would consist of twenty-one sets of two rooms, and ninety sets of three rooms of various sizes. ... Each dwelling was to be supplied with water, ... with a sink, with a means of carrying of refuse and ashes through a shaft ..."

"The area occupied is large, and the dimensions of the building are 222 feet frontage to Platt Street, 108 feet to St. Pancras Road, and about the same to Goldington Street."

"These buildings have the advantage of larger-sized apartments, and unobstructed light and air. The internal staircase arrangement involves them in the heavy charge of window-tax."

"The buildings ... have more applicants than can be accommodated. ... The rents vary from 3s. to 7s. a week."

The first paragraph is from The Builder, *Vol.* 5, 1847, *p.* 16, *the second from Vol.* 14, *p.* 397, *the fourth from Vol.* 6, 1848, *p.* 376. *The third stands on p.* 14 *of H. Roberts's:* The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes. *The architect of this first block of working-class flats in London—its front still stands, but the rest was destroyed by bombs—is called Moffat, presumably W. B. Moffatt* (1812-97), *the early partner of Gilbert Scott. The two built chiefly for the Poor Law Commissioners. The arrangement of the flats is similar to Birkenhead, but the staircase has no windows.*

W. B. Moffatt: Model houses in the Old Pancras Road, 1848, *the first many-storied working-class houses in London.*

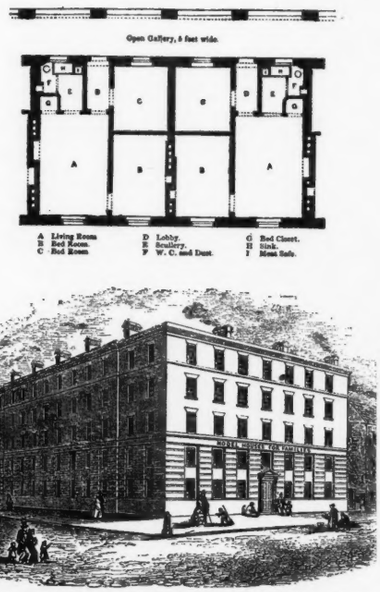
STREATHAM STREET, BLOOMSBURY

This block—the æsthetically most satisfactory example of early working-class architecture—is still in existence, two minutes from the British Museum, yet utterly forgotten. The photographs on this and the following pages show its surprisingly dignified design, the work of Henry Roberts.

"The Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes ... have commenced a block of new Model Houses for 48 families in Streatham Street, Bloomsbury, ... designed by Mr. H. Roberts, the society's honorary architect. ... In undertaking to provide in one pile of building for the accommodation of a large number of families, amongst the most important considerations was that of preserving the domestic privacy ... of each distinct family, and so disconnecting their apartments as effectually to prevent the communication of contagious diseases; this ... is accomplished by dispensing altogether with separate staircases ... and by adopting one common open staircase leading into galleries or corridors, open on one side to a spatious quadrangle, and on the other side having the outer doors of the several tenements. ... The slate floors of these ... galleries rest on iron beams. ... The question of rendering the building fireproof had much consideration. ... The floors and roofs ... are to be rendered fireproof by arching with hollow bricks ... set in cement. ... At the extremities, ... they will be tied in with iron rods. ... The tenements being ... separate dwellings, and having fewer than seven windows in each, it is hoped that they will not be liable to the window duty."

"The Model Houses in Streatham Street ... are now nearly ready for occupation, and were opened to private view on Tuesday."

The Builder, *Vol.* 7, 1849, *p.* 325, *and Vol.* 8, 1850, *p.* 250. *The basement also contains flats. This brought the total up to fifty-four. They were let at 2s. to 4s. a week. In* 1852 *the house yielded a profit of* 5.75 *per cent. On the window tax see below. The outer gallery had been used a few years before in Kent Terrace, Liverpool* (The Builder, *Vol.* 3, 1845, *p.* 220). *It had also been recommended by Junius Redivivus in* 1831 (*see page* 120) *and, in* 1848, *by an anonymous contributor to* The Builder (*Vol.* 6, *p.* 124).

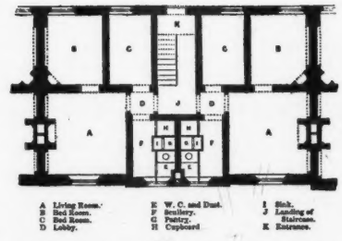


Henry Roberts: Model houses in Streatham Street, 1849-1850. *See the photographs on the facing page.*

DEAL STREET, SPITALFIELDS

"We are happy to find the 'Metropolitan Association' pursuing their object energetically, as well as, we believe, with a sincere desire for the public good. The last step they have taken has been the purchase of a piece of ground in one of those localities in which their efforts may be particularly beneficial—the district of Spitalfields. A piece of freehold ground has been obtained ... on which they are about to erect a dormitory, or lodging-house for 300 single men, and residences for forty families at the least; and they applied to six architects to send designs in competition. Five of these, only, answered the call. ... They were Mr. Beck, Mr. Barnett, Mr. Grellier, Mr. Daukes and Mr. Ricardo."

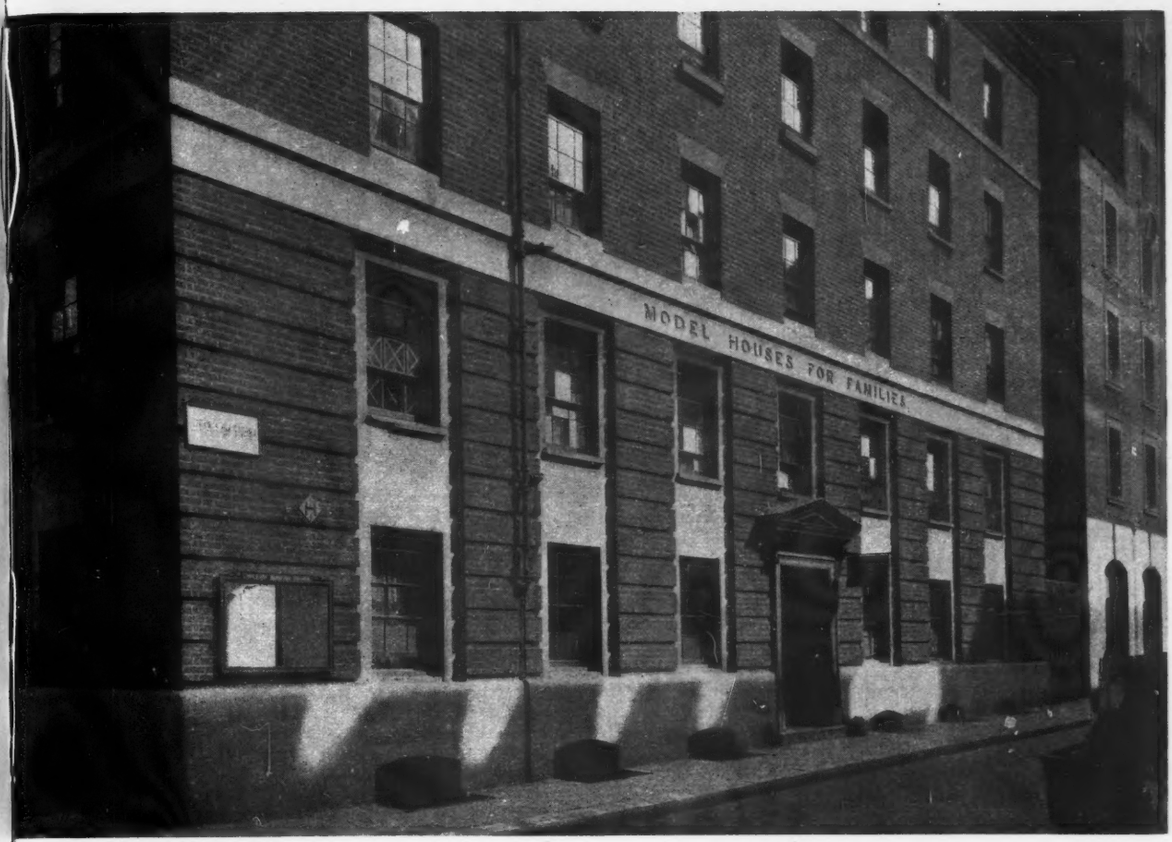
The Builder, *Vol.* 6, 1848, *p.* 376. *Mr. Ricardo is, of course, not Halsey Ricardo. Beck was in the end commissioned. The facades illustrated are at the corner of Underwood Street and Deal Street. There are now sixty flats in the "Albert Family Dwellings." Ten of them are in the basement. Each staircase serves fifteen flats. Within the next ten years after the Albert Dwellings the Metropolitan Association built several other blocks. They are enumerated in H. Roberts's* The Improvements of the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes, 1859, *p.* 15. *Amongst them are Ingestre Buildings, off Golden Square, for sixty families (completed in* 1856, *cf.* The Builder, *Vol.* 14, *p.* 396) *and Nelson Square, Bermondsey, for* 108 *families (completed in* 1860, The Builder, *Vol.* 18, *p.* 409). *The other early schemes of the Metropolitan Association were smaller. But in* 1875 *the society housed* 5,300 *people in* 1,060 *dwellings.*

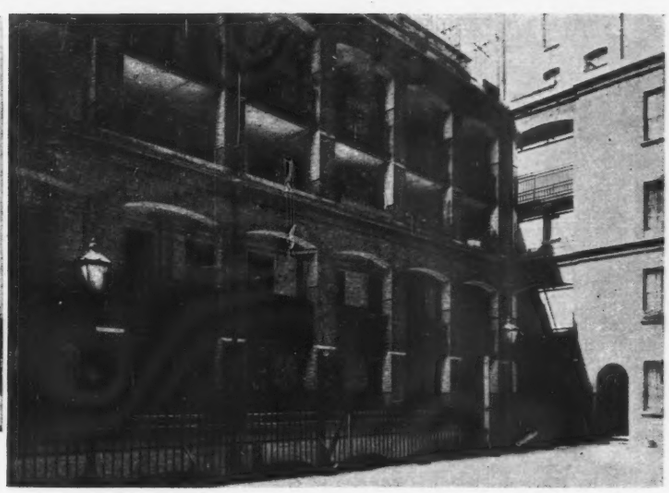


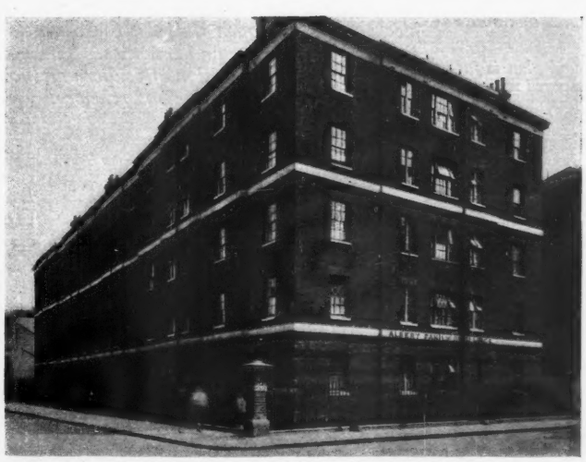
Beck: Model houses in Deal Street, Spitalfields, 1849. *For a general plan and a photograph see facing page.*

PORTPOOL LANE, GRAY'S INN ROAD

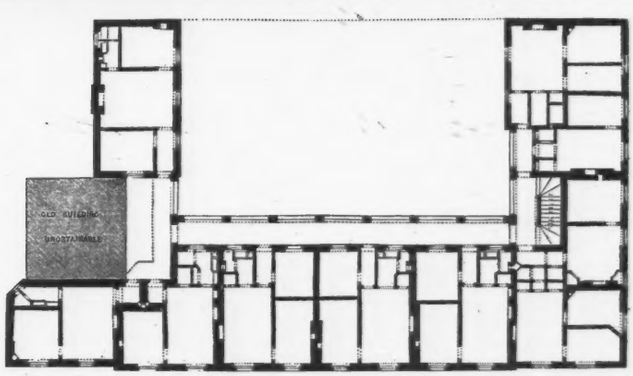
"Liberal contributions received in response to an appeal by the Bishop of London, have enabled the committee appointed for the purpose, to purchase a freehold site in Portpool Lane, Gray's Inn Road, on which is to be erected a model dwelling for 20 families and 128 single women. ... The accommodation



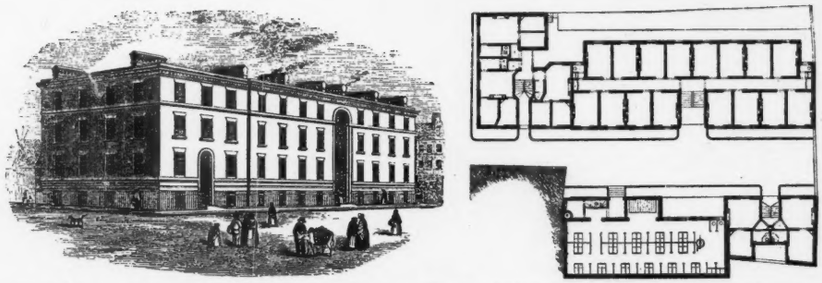




Albert Family Dwellings *is the name of the block of flats in Deal Street. The style of the facades is evidently influenced by Henry Roberts.*



Model Houses for Families *is the name of the Streatham Street flats. They are built on the open gallery system which permits of a less crammed and more hygienic plan than those of the earlier flats had been. The facades have a square solidity and a careful handling of detail superior to any of the other schemes here illustrated. The sturdy stone and iron work of the galleries should be noted.*



Model houses in Portpool Lane, Gray's Inn Road, 1850-1851. *They are a combination of family dwellings (North-West and South-East), one-room dwellings for single women and a lodging house. The south side has been entirely, the north side partly, destroyed by bombs. The style is similar to that of Streatham Street—nothing yet of the bleakness of* 1860 *to* 1890 *working-class architecture.*

for 20 families will consist of two buildings four stories in height, one having three tenements with three rooms on each floor, and the other two tenements with two rooms on each floor ; . . . to both houses there will be an open staircase, and to the larger one a gallery of communication."

" The 'Thanksgiving Model Buildings' in Portpool Lane, Gray's Inn Road [were] built in commemoration of the removal of the cholera. They were commenced in 1850, and occupied in 1851."

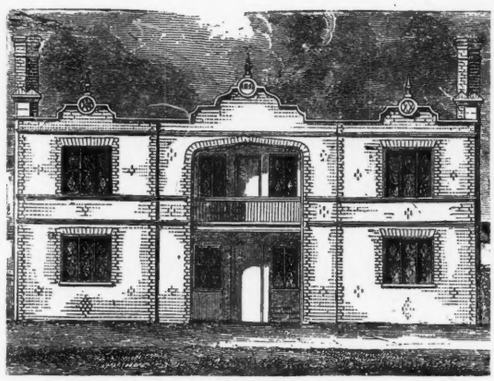
The Builder, *Vol.* 8, 1850, *p.* 297, *and Vol.* 10, 1852, *p.* 705. *In* The Builder *for* 1850 (*pp.* 10 *and* 106), *and for* 1852 (*p.* 427) *a few other model houses are mentioned. Now the movement began also to spread to the Continent. Henry Roberts's book was translated into French, and a Société des Cités Ouvrières founded in Paris.*

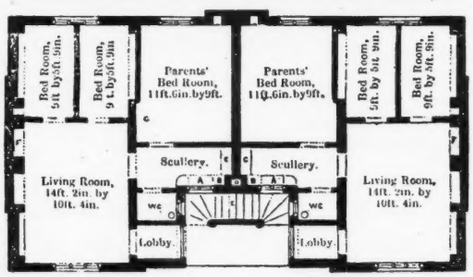
EIGHTEEN FIFTY-ONE

The year of the Great Exhibition, of the abolition—at long last—of the Window Tax, and of Shaftesbury's Labouring Classes Lodging House Act. The window tax had been a scandal ever since the industrial revolution. When it was introduced in 1687, *it was a form to regulate in quite an innocuous way the size of houses. The placing of windows was virtually standardized. As soon as cheap housing on a large scale was needed early in the nineteenth century, the tax became a menace. It made blocks of tenement houses impossible, unless it could be proved that they were agglomerations of independent small houses. Hence the open galleries and open staircases—which were of course also useful for ventilation. The Lodging House Act enabled large parishes and boroughs to build better houses out of the poor rates. But few took advantage of the act. Prince Albert's object lesson in better housing at the Exhibition was badly needed.*

" Model Houses for four families erected at the Cavalry Barracks, Hyde Park.—His Royal Highness Prince Albert, as President of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, has had this building raised with a desire of conveying practical information calculated to promote the much needed improvement of the dwellings of the working classes, and also of stimulating visitors to the Great Exhibition whose position and circumstances may enable them, by the carrying out of similar undertakings, without pecuniary sacrifice, permanently to benefit those who are greatly dependent on others for their home and domestic comforts. In its general arrangement the building [designed by Mr. Henry Roberts, F.S.A., the Society's honorary architect] is adapted for the occupation of four families, and . . . as the value of land . . . , in some cases, renders the addition of a third, and even of a fourth, story desirable, the plan has been suited to such an arrangement. . . . The most prominent peculiarity of the design is that of the receding and protected central open staircase, with the connecting gallery on the first floor. . . . The peculiarities of the building in . . . respect (to construction) are the exclusive use of hollow bricks for the walls and partitions . . . and the entire absence of timber in the floors and roof, which are formed with flat arches of hollow brickwork . . . and tied in by wrought-iron rods connected with cast-iron springers."

The Builder, *Vol.* 9, 1851, *p.* 311. *Henry Roberts was a firm believer in hollow bricks. The ground plan is far in advance of later buildings. The position of lobby, lavatory and scullery should be noted and compared with the plans on pages* 127 *and* 128.




Bed Room, 9ft. by 9ft. 9in.
Bed Room, 9 ft. by 9ft. 9in.
Parents' Bed Room, 11ft. 6in. by 9ft.
Parents' Bed Room, 11ft. 6in. by 9ft.
Bed Room, 9ft. by 9ft. 9in.
Bed Room, 9ft. by 9ft. 9in.
Scullery.
Scullery.
Living Room, 14ft. 2in. by 10ft. 4in.
Living Room, 14ft. 2in. by 10ft. 4in.
wc
wc
Lobby.
Lobby.

A Sink, with Coal Box under.
B Plate Rack over entrance to Dust Shaft, D.
C Meat Safe, ventilated through hollow bricks.
E Staircase of Slate, with Dust Place under.
F Cupboard warmed from back of Fireplace.
G Linen Closet in this recess if required.

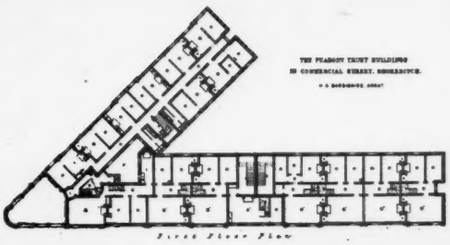
Henry Roberts : Model houses erected for the 1851 *Exhibition. They were designed so as to be possible for three-storied and four-storied blocks too. The open staircase became a standard feature of the sixties and seventies. The insertion of a lobby and the position of scullery and lavatory are improvements on previous schemes.*

STAGNANCY AND NEW IMPULSES

By 1851 *the work of the early reformers was done. The Society for Improving the Conditions and the Metropolitan Association entered into a phase of sluggish progress. In* 1853 *Roberts left for abroad ; in* 1856 *he resigned his job ; in* 1860 *he wrote that the societies' financial position had " lately become discouraging."*

Some new societies appeared, such as the Lambeth Association, founded as an outcome of the Labourers' Dwellings Act of 1855, *an act to facilitate the formation of joint-stock house-building companies (cf.* The Builder, *Vol.* 12, *p.* 577, *and Vol.* 13, *p.* 490). *Private humanitarian enterprise also was not absent (cf. H. Roberts,* The Progress of the Movement . . . , 1860).

But nothing was done on a large scale. Prince Albert died in 1861. *Then, immediately after his death a new phase began, characterized by the Peabody Trust, by Alderman Sydney Waterlow's building enterprise, and the earliest municipal working-class flats.*



The Peabody Trust estates (architect: H. A. Darbishire) mark the beginning of the second phase in the history of London's working-class housing. The first, in Commercial Street, Whitechapel (see plan above), was erected in 1864. *During the next ten years dwellings were provided for nearly four thousand people—a generous scheme, truly humanitarian in its intentions, yet depressing in its results. The standardized frontages—of the two photographs the left is of an earlier pattern, the standard one of about* 1870 *appears on the right—are bleak and inhuman, with nothing of the dignity of Henry Roberts. The plans with the internal corridors are far from satisfactory.*

GEORGE PEABODY AND THE PEABODY TRUST

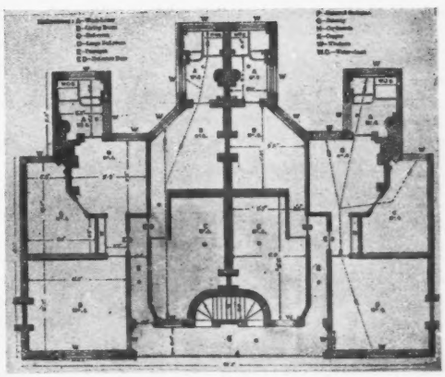
" Mr. Geo. Peabody, the American banker, has given a formal shape to his intention, already mentioned by us, of conveying to trustees £150,000 to be applied ' exclusively to such purposes as may be calculated directly to ameliorate the condition and augment the comforts of the poor . . . of London.' "

George Peabody (1795-1869) *was an American. His parents had been poor. He started independent life as a grocer's apprentice. At the age of nineteen he opened a wholesale dry goods warehouse. In* 1815 *he opened a branch at Baltimore, in* 1822 *at Philadelphia and New York. In* 1837 *he settled down in London, a very rich man. In* 1843 *he retired from his American business and started banking in London. The American section of the* 1851 *exhibition was paid by Peabody privately.*

" Mr. Peabody points out the probable desirability of applying ' the fund or a portion of it, in the construction of such improved dwellings for the poor, as may combine in the utmost possible degree the essentials of healthfulness, comfort, social enjoyment, and economy.' "

" The Peabody Building (in Commercial Street, Whitechapel) on which is being expended a part of Mr. Peabody's gift, is rapidly approaching completion. This is satisfactory; but, after careful inspection we are forced, somewhat unwillingly, to say that this structure will not meet the demands of the poor. . . . We shall find there well-paid mechanics . . . [but] not the poor of Bethnal Green . . . who can only afford to pay a weekly rent of from 2s. to 3s. a week . . ."

The Builder, *Vol.* 20, 1862, *p.* 228, *and Vol.* 22, 1864, *p.* 67. *The Peabody Building situated at the corner of Commercial Street and White Lion (now Folgate) Street was opened in March,* 1864. *It is a four-storeyed block of stock brick, with frontages of* 215 *and* 140 *feet. The ground floor has shops towards Commercial Street. The rusticated bands on ground floor and first floor follow Roberts's example. The top floor was entirely given to baths, drying areas and playing areas for children in wet weather. There is a certain amount of Gothic decoration, gables with tall pointed windows, etc. The staircases face the court and are open. Rooms are on either side of long corridors, lavatories only by the staircases. The walls were originally without wallpaper or distempering. Rents ranged from 2s. 6d. to 5s. a week; 48 of the 57 dwellings were 4s. 6d. or 5s. The architect was H. A. Darbishire who had in* 1860-61 *built a group of working-class dwelling-houses for that lovable Victorian character, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, at Columbia Square, Bethnal Green (cf.* The Builder, *Vol.* 19, *p.* 530). *He lectured on working-class houses in* 1863 (The Building News, *Vol.* 10, 1863, *and* The Builder, *Vol.* 21, 1863). *His design for the Peabody Trust was illustrated in the* Civil Engineer, *Vol.* 27, 1864, *p.* 124. *It was for the next block, in Greenman Street, Islington, replaced by a more austere Italianate design, which with a few additional modifications, was applied identical, down to minute details, in the later buildings, erected when Mr. Peabody had raised his gift to* £500,000. *Here is a list of them, down to* 1875: *Greenman Street, Islington (opened* 1865; 244 *tenements); Glamis Place, Shadwell* (1867; 199); *Horseferry Road, Westminster* (1869; 146; *now re-built); Lawrence Street, Chelsea* (1870; 67); *Blackfriars Road* (1871; 367); *Stamford Street* (1875; 438); *East Lane, Bermondsey* (1875; 72). *At the end of* 1874 3,815 *people lived in Peabody tenements. The average rent was* 3s. 11d. *a week for two rooms.*

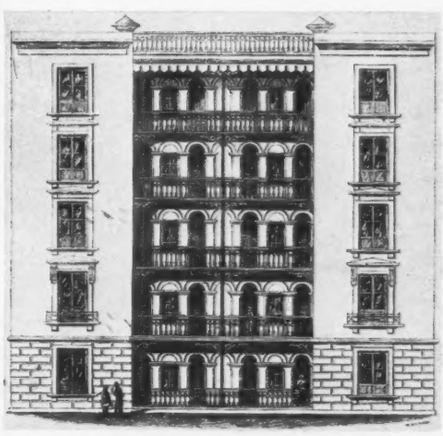


ALDERMAN SYDNEY WATERLOW

" Mr. Alderman Waterlow has built for £2,000 in Mark Street, Finsbury, for the industrial classes, a pile of ' chambers ' of middling quality and not agreeable forms, from which he expects to receive 9 per cent. for his money; and on Saturday last, Lord Ebury, Lord Radstock, Mr. Samuel Morley, Mr. A. Kinnaird, M.P., Mr. Gregson, M.P., Mr. W. Hawes, Mr. Roberts, Mr. E. Chadwick and many more assembled on the roof of the building to express with somewhat overloud trumpets the debt the community owed to him. . . . The main cause of its cheapness is said to be the adoption of a concrete or artificial stone, composed of clinkers, culm, hard broken coke and similar rough porous calcined substances, . . . for lintels, arches, chimney-pieces, stairs, balconies, the floors of the wash-houses and passages, and the roof. . . . Another reason given for the cheapness, if we understand rightly, is the non-employment of an ' architect.' . . . The rents expected are . . . from 5s. to 7s. per week."

The Builder, *Vol.* 21, 1863, *p.* 198. *The block is called Langbourne Buildings. Its ground plan differs from all the earlier ones in the removal of scullery and lavatory to the back of each flat, and the absurd narrowness of the staircase. No name of an architect is given. Sydney Waterlow was born in* 1822 *as the son of a small stationer. He was apprenticed in* 1836 *to Harrison's and added printing to his father's business in* 1844. *He was knighted in* 1867, *and Lord Mayor in* 1872. *Waterlow's are to-day one of the largest printing houses of Britain.*

Two important events were the outcome of this venture and must here be recorded: the foundation of the Improved Industrial Dwellings Company, and the erection of the first City of London municipal flats.



Alderman Waterlow's block of flats in Mark Street, Finsbury, 1863. *The facade is made more genteel by some ornamental features. The plan has obvious faults, such as the absurdly narrow winding staircase and the narrow lobbies. Yet it was imitated widely during the sixties and seventies when working-class flats were built by new companies in thousands. The gloom and very often the meanness of these flats account for the still universal dislike of flat-living among the working classes in twentieth century England.*

THE IMPROVED INDUSTRIAL DWELLINGS COMPANY

"On Saturday, a meeting of merchants, bankers, and others desirous of co-operating with a view to improve the homes of the working classes, was held at the Mansion House, Lord Stanley presiding. It is proposed to form an association of twenty or thirty gentlemen, protected by the Limited Liability Act, and having a capital of £25,000 to £50,000, to be invested in the erection of a series of blocks of improved dwellings . . . upon the experience which Mr. Waterlow had obtained in erecting a block of buildings in a crowded part of Finsbury. Mr. Waterlow said that for . . . £25,000 . . . they would be able to put up buildings for . . . 200 families [with] a net return of 6 per cent. . . . after the payment of all expenses . . ."

The Builder, *Vol.* 21, 1863, *p.* 429. *So Waterlow still regarded working-class housing as a profit-yielding proposition.*

Waterlow was the first chairman of The Improved Industrial Dwellings Company. Its earliest buildings (near King's Cross) are mentioned in The Builder, *Vol.* 21, *p.* 736. *In* 1875 *it housed* 1,433 *families in fifteen blocks, in* 1906 6,000 *with a population of nearly* 30,000. *Soon, on the example, set by Waterlow, other large companies were founded to do as good business what the earlier societies had done in a humanitarian spirit. The Artizans', Labourers' and General Dwelling Company was founded in* 1867. *Its first estates (of small houses) were the Shaftesbury Park Estate, Harrow Road, with* 80 *acres. These and many other similar firms paid; but they did not cater for the really poor. To them—this had already been recognized in* 1865*—no help could be brought by the capitalist.*

WORKING-CLASS FLATS ARE NO LUCRATIVE INVESTMENT

"The committee appointed by the Society of Arts with the view of ascertaining if anything can be done to remedy or mitigate the evils arising from the want of proper dwellings for the labouring classes . . . includes the names of Mr. Akroyd . . ., Mr. Chadwick . . ., Mr. Cole . . ., Mr. G. Godwin . . ., Mr. J. Stuart Mill . . ., Earl of Shaftesbury, Sir J. Kay Shuttleworth, Lord Stanley . . ., Alderman Waterlow. . . . The committee have made a report in which . . . it was shown that . . . at present the dwellings provided . . . by societies and benevolent individuals . . . in the metropolis only accommodate about 7,000 persons, and the commercial results are not so as to encourage builders and capitalists to undertake the building of dwellings for labourers as an ordinary matter of business. It appears . . . that it rarely happens that such undertakings produce a higher dividend than five per cent. . . . and . . . it can hardly be expected that dwellings will be provided in anything like sufficient numbers, until they can be made to produce such a return as will compensate a builder for investing his capital in this kind of property, attended as it is with so much more risk and trouble than houses of a superior kind."

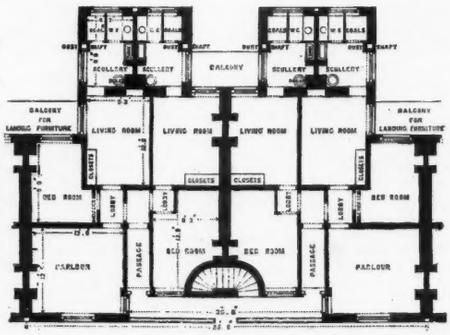
The Builder, *Vol.* 23, 1865, *pp.* 88 *and* 351. *Mr. Akroyd is the Yorkshire manufacturer who built the working-class suburb of Akroydon. Mr. Cole (Sir Henry Cole) was a most forceful character, famous for his connection first with penny postage, then with the* 1851 *Exhibition, and after that with the administration of the South Kensington Museums and Colleges. The other names have already been mentioned.*

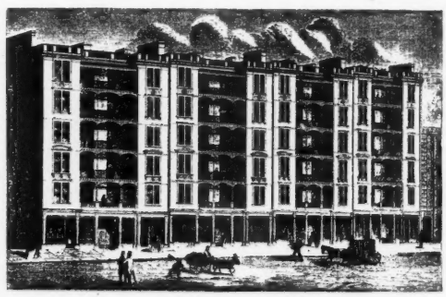
THE FIRST MUNICIPAL WORKING-CLASS FLATS

If therefore better dwellings for the poor were needed—and it was well enough known that they were—they had to be supplied by public authorities out of public funds. This, however, nobody recognized. Yet, as a pointer in the right direction, and a decidedly promising last item in this anthology, the second outcome of Waterlow's enterprise must be quoted:

CORPORATION BUILDINGS, FARRINGDON STREET. The necessity for providing accommodation for the large number of the poorer classes displaced by street improvements and other great public works in the City, has for some time past occupied the attention of the Corporation; but it was not until 1862 that any positive steps were taken to erect improved dwellings. At the close of that year Mr. Alderman Waterlow drew the attention of the Common Council to the subject, . . . the Corporation realized its obligations, and has discharged them. A piece of freehold land in the Farringdon Road was at once appropriated, and a pile of buildings . . . containing accommodation for 168 families . . . erected at a further cost of £37,000. The buildings are similar in design to those erected in 1863 by Mr. Alderman Waterlow, in Finsbury. . . . The rents range from 4s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. per week. . . . These buildings were built from the designs, and under the superintendence, of the City Architect, Mr. Horace Jones.

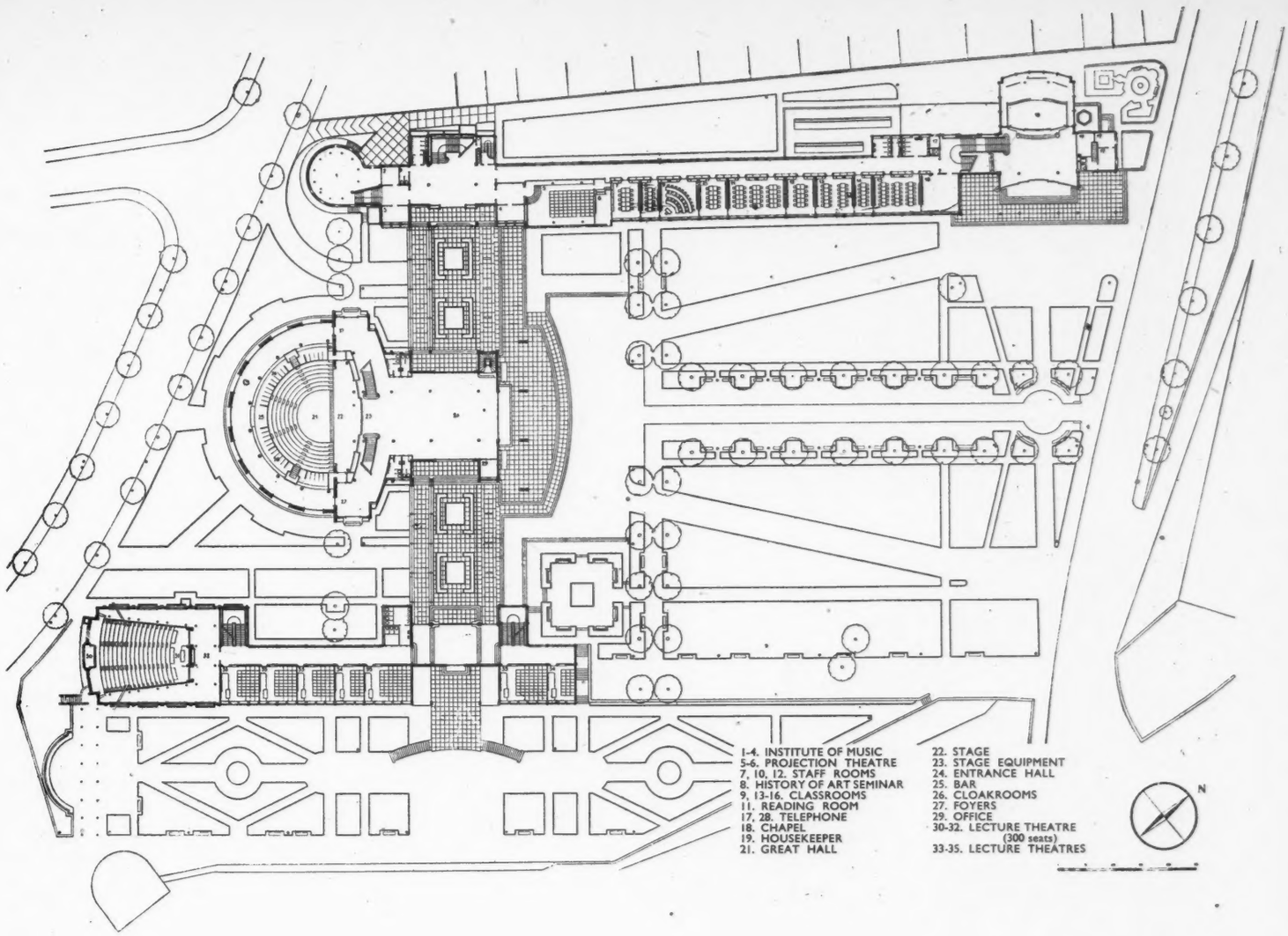
The Builder, *Vol.* 23, 1865, *p.* 484. *Horace, later Sir Horace, Jones* (1819-1887) *is the architect of the Smithfield Markets and Tower Bridge.*





Corporation Buildings, Farringdon Street, built for the Corporation of the City of London by Horace Jones. The design is almost copied from Waterlow's. The result is equally grim. But the block is memorable as the earliest example of municipal working-class flats in London—the forerunner of the vast housing activities of the London County Council.

So here the Corporation of the City of London appeared for the first time as a house building authority. The venture was possible under the Lodging Houses Act of 1851. *But such ventures remained exceptional until much later. The Metropolitan Board of Works did not start on slum clearance until* 1875. *And these cleared areas were handed over to the Peabody Trust, the Artizans', Labourers' and General, or similar companies for erecting new houses. The London County Council was founded in* 1889. *The Housing of the Working Class Act became law in* 1890. *This at last altered things fundamentally. The L.C.C. had fresh social ideas and fresh ideas on architectural style and domestic comfort too. It realized that nothing adequate could be achieved, unless the notion of private profit was abandoned and housing recognized as a public duty. And it also realized that flats would never be really welcome to the London workmen unless they were made much more cheerful. So the Neo-Georgian of the L.C.C.—an outcome of the style of the Shaw school—replaced the grim austerity of the earlier blocks. These had been—there is no question about that—a great improvement on the slums of Chadwick, Alton Locke and Tom-all-alone's. But they are—this is equally undeniable—the slums of to-day, a little more hygienic perhaps than Bethnal Green cottages (I say perhaps, because a tenant stopped me, while I was making notes in the court of one block of c.* 1860 *not here illustrated, and—probably taking me for a surveyor—confided to me that she never "got a rest from them bugs"), but far more depressing and obscene. Their blackness has made it extremely difficult for architects to this day to enlist amongst the working class any sympathy with rehousing in flats. Yet, until this prejudice is overcome, no sound slum clearance policy can be carried through. Thus the last hundred years have seen a steady rise in standards of life and domestic commodities, but, in spite of the memorable efforts of* 1850, *no break with the cottage idea.*

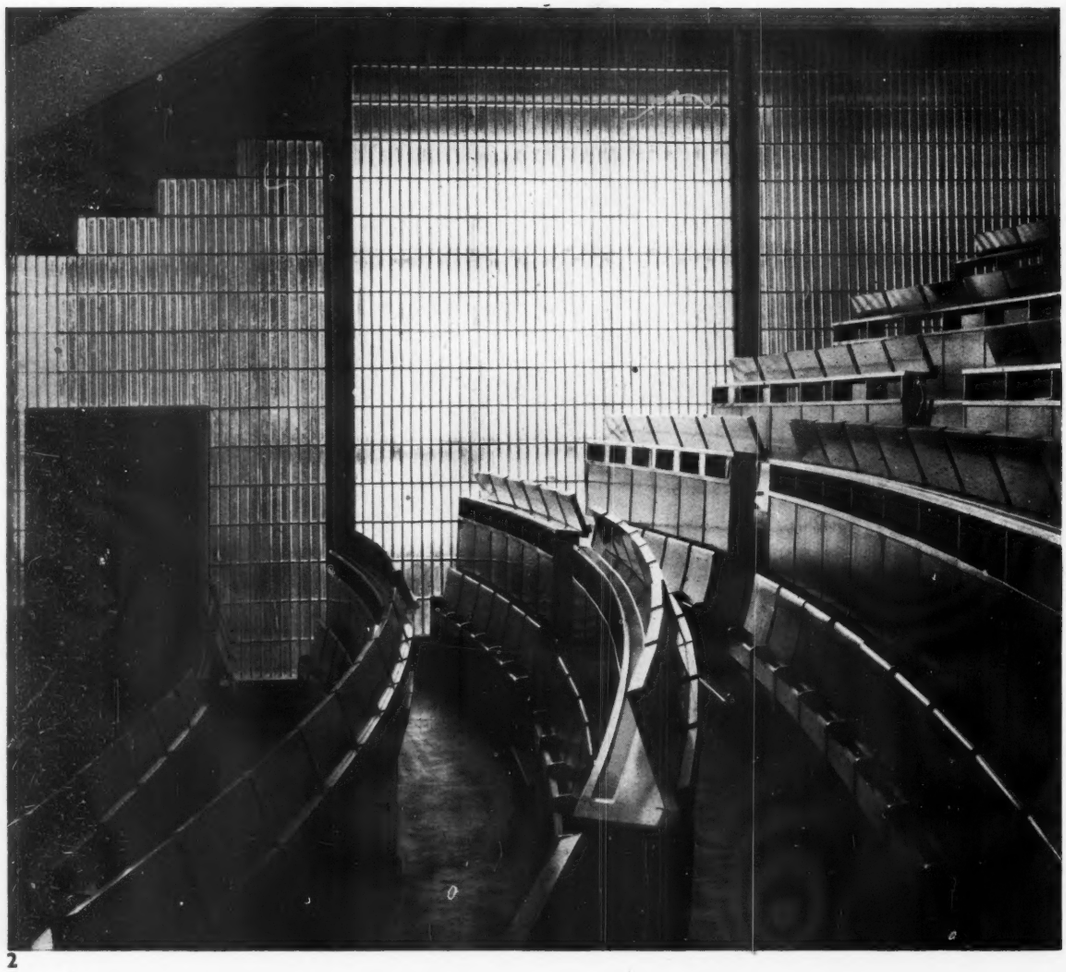


THE NEW UNIVERSITY AT FRIBOURG

Architects: F. Dumas and D. Honegger

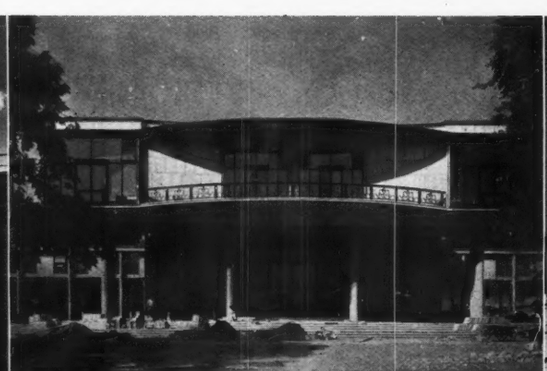
1, *view from the south-east with the classrooms building in the background and the chief entrance to the Great Hall on the left.* **5** *(on the next page) is a detailed view of this entrance, an interesting concrete variation on a classical theme.*

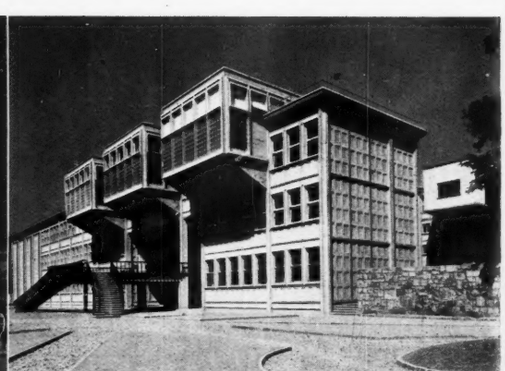
FRIBOURG UNIVERSITY



2

6 gives an impression of the pleasant, free grouping of the buildings : lecture theatres wing in the foreground, Great Hall behind left, classrooms block further back right. The far end of the classrooms block houses the chapel. **8** *is the chapel entrance,* **4** *the magnificent roof terrace of this wing. The chief entrance to the lecture theatres is from the north, with three of the major theatres cantilevered out above,* **7**. *The wing with the lecture theatres has also got a roof terrace. It ends on the left, just visible on* **6**, *in an open-air lecture theatre,* **3**. *Below this, on the ground floor, is the* 300*-seats theatre,* **2**.





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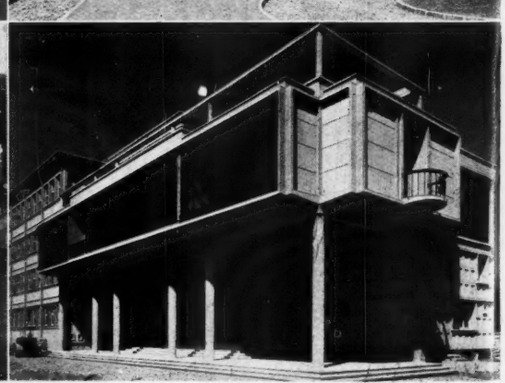

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The work of the architects of the Roman Catholic University at Fribourg in Switzerland, is of a two-fold interest to architects in Britain. A complete university is a complicated job. Most of the provincial universities in this country are housed in utterly inadequate Victorian buildings. New accommodation will no doubt be needed for several of them as soon as the war is over. There are few buildings anywhere to which architects might go for a close study of planning solutions.

While it is the plan at Fribourg that English architects will chiefly look at, it is the elevations which repay the attention of those in search of enlightenment about international recent developments of architectural style. Denis Honegger worked under Le Corbusier, when the plans for the League of Nations buildings were on the drawing boards. He then went to Perret in Paris—that is back from the second to the first concrete generation. Perret's style far more than Le Corbusier's is reflected at Fribourg. The connections to Perret's church of Le Rainzy, Palais de Bois and Theatre at the 1925 Exhibition, and even to the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées of 1911-13 are self-evident. The prevalent tendency is one towards a synthesis of concrete requirements with the spirit of classical tradition—the spirit not the forms. The corresponding tendency in Britain is satisfied with Neo-Georgian or Neo-Palladian copies or variations. At Fribourg there is no column and no correct moulding. Yet the fluted shafts and coffered ceilings retain a flavour of classicity, decidedly French, as no one can fail to notice.

In plan, however, the new university goes beyond Perret and the younger official French architects responsible for such buildings as the new Trocadéro. Here Le Corbusier's inspiration cannot be overlooked. In France they would have kept to a symmetrical grouping. Messrs. Dumas and Honegger knew of the superior spatial effects obtainable only by abandoning classical symmetry. So while for the entrance hall and great hall they reserved the central axis of the central wing, the two chief wings stretch out from the centre's north end towards east, and from the south end towards west. The north-east wing is long, and ends on the east in the chapel with its separate entrance hall. The south-west wing, containing chiefly classrooms, is shorter and reserved for lecture theatres. One of these at roof terrace height, is open to the sun ; three others are cantilevered out in a characteristic way, invented by Melnikov for his famous workers' club in Moscow.

The construction of the buildings is concrete throughout, with the unmistakable ornamentation of the chapel, copied in its motifs almost literally from Le Rainzy.

Mediaeval and modern symbolism

THE analogies of style between modern sculpture and that of the early ages in England are fully recognized, but the similarities in the use of symbolism by ancient and modern sculptors, and the differences in the reactions of their public to such use, have hardly received the attention which they deserve.

Both the likeness in technique and the difference in the impression conveyed can be illustrated by a comparison between one of the Saxon angels in the church at Bradford-on-Avon, and one of the figures of the Winds from St. James' Park Underground Station. In each case we have a figure in high relief, projecting from the plain surface of a wall without any structural feature, such as a corbel, to suggest support. The figures appear to be moving through empty space, their legs bent sharply upwards at the knees to suggest rapid propulsion through the air, and whether they impress us with that sense of stability, which is the prerequisite of pleasure in architecture, depends entirely upon our imaginative response to their design, since both figures are, in fact, securely built into the wall. The Saxon angel conveys such assurance in its power of flying to the support of the now vanished Rood that it seems to fulfil a structural function while the modern figure appears so anxious about the success of the experiment in levitation which has led to its being thrown from an upper window that doubts as to the stability of the carving disturb our æsthetic appreciation of its design. Our reason is much more ready to believe in flight as the result of levitation than by the manipulation of a pair of wings (for the attachment of which the human anatomy provides no facilities), but our imaginations still respond more easily to the familiar imagery of wings than to the new convention which symbolizes force and motion by the distortion of perspective.

The idea of a symbolical language, readily understood by a considerable proportion of the intelligent public, is strange to us. Our powers of analysis and of exact representation have increased greatly since the Middle Ages and our language has been correspondingly enriched to give them expression. We can offer our artists easier and richer media in which to display their increased technical skill and yet, just because the ideas which they wish to impart can usually be so accurately defined, we have allowed our imaginations to atrophy ; we expect our minds to be stimulated by vivid prose or lively draughtsmanship without any corresponding effort on our part to further the impressions which these suggest. When modern painters and sculptors try to give expression to ideas not normally expressed in visual form, the public becomes bewildered and hostile. The artists, assuming that mutual understanding is no longer to be hoped for, become increasingly contemptuous and obscure.

Yet the language of symbols ought not to be beyond the scope of the common man, for it has one great advantage over our modern precision of expression which can only be varied by misunderstanding. The imagination, stimulated by a symbol, will call up such recondite or simple images as each individual mind is fitted to receive. The use of animal carvings in medieval churches is an excellent example of this advantage. Take the carvings of elephants for example —with the exception of the misericord in Exeter Cathedral, which probably owes its accuracy of rendering to the arrival in England of the elephant given to Henry III, most of the carvings are strange creations, and yet their strangeness once had both meaning and the power to launch men's imaginations on far-flung lines of thought. All the carvings show rigid legs, for the elephant was supposed to have no joints in its legs and to take its rest leaning against a tree. If the hunter half-sawed through the tree the elephant fell (as Man fell through the fruit of a tree) and could only escape capture if a young elephant (Christ) raised it after twelve other elephants (the Prophets) had failed to do so. Many carved elephants carry on their backs battlemented structures filled with armed men ; we mock the naive carvers who thus transformed the travellers' accounts of the howdah into stone-built castles, for we cannot equal the imaginative powers that could conceive an animal so vast that stone castles could be built upon its back. For all its immense strength the elephant was supposed to be so chaste that it only mated once in its life of three hundred years, when it was seduced by the female into eating mandragora (another reference to Eve). This subject was beyond the scope of the carvers, yet many members of a medieval congregation, having been taught that the elephant symbolized Christ by its chastity, would have had their minds enriched by the memory of this strange legend as they gazed at even crude carvings of a beast with a long nose.

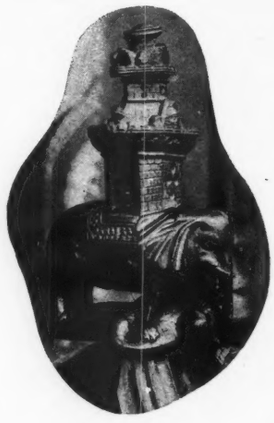
The more amazing were the varieties of creation, the greater was the power and the glory of the Creator. The rays which emanate from the hands of Christ, in the Pentecost over the west door at Vézelay, include under their benign influence all races which were supposed to inhabit the earth represented by small

Headpiece : bench-end from Launcells. The two flying figures are an Anglo-Saxon angel at Bradford-on-Avon and South Wind, by Eric Gill (Underground Building, London)

figures, carved in the inner order of the door and on the lintel, and including as weird a collection of distortions of the human form as any artist of the twentieth century could have devised. To have confined imagery to the familiar forms would have been to lessen the praise of God. For the teachers of the Middle Ages almost every earthly object had its spiritual counterpart, to the contemplation of which its representation was supposed to lead the thoughts of all beholders, but the carvers were rarely concerned with real life and preferred to choose their concrete symbols from the strange world of legend and travellers' tales rather than from the results of their own observation. Dragons and griffins abound, while cows and sheep are rare, and when such a well-known beast as the stag is shown on a

misericord in Ely Cathedral it is represented eating a snake, so that people shall realize that it is the legendary hart, which symbolizes Christ by its battle with the serpent of Evil, and not the familiar stag of the English woodlands. This world of fantasy seems to set free the imagination from the associations of reality, as an introduction to mystical thought, in much the same way in which the distortions of modern artists break down the old conventions of pictorial representation in order to concentrate attention upon the abstract quality which is their chosen theme, but medieval carvings have the advantage that even the least mystical mind can derive some interest from their concrete forms.

Medieval symbolism had the further advantage that the craftsman's lack of skill hardly decreased his power of suggestion. The most sacred subjects could be suggested by animal carvings so crude as to be hardly recognizable, when any direct representation would have seemed blasphemously inappropriate. This also applies to the manner in which the later medieval carvers represented Christ's Passion in terms of heraldry. On benches in the Cornish churches of Poughill, Kilkhampton and Launcells there is a particularly full series of such shields whose devices suggest almost every incident of the Sacred Drama. The table is set for the Last Supper, the jug, basin and towel tell of the washing of the Apostles' feet, the thirty pieces of silver and the sword of St. Peter, with the ear of the servant still attached to its blade, illustrate the Betrayal. The Pillar and Scourges, the Crown of Thorns, the Cross with the nails, the lance and the sponge on the reed appear often, while, at Kilkhampton, the Seamless Robe is shown hanging over a rail while a fist grasps the straws with which to draw lots for it. No complete human figure is depicted, but the head of a sleeping soldier is seen over the back of the coffin from which the Banner of Christ is rising while the head of Adam peers from the throat of a Hell Mouth from which the same Banner is delivering him. It would be difficult to imagine a more concise rendering of an immense theme than this brief statement of the "Harrowing of Hell." The scenes of the Resurrection are indicated by the hand of Thomas

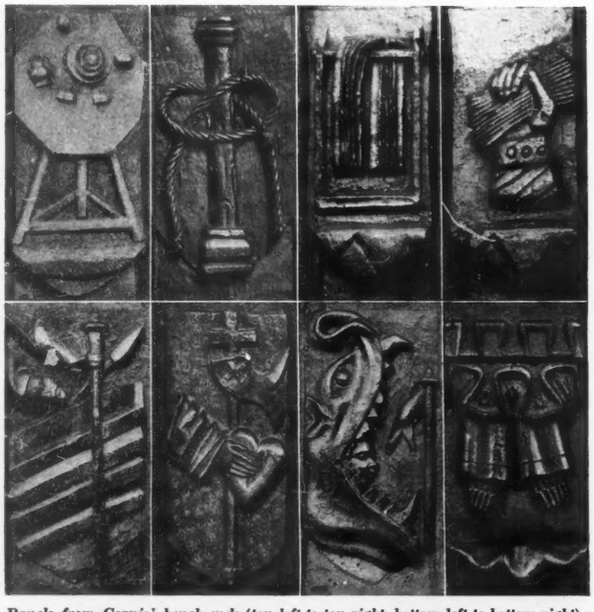


touching a wounded heart hung on the stave of Christ's banner, and by the feet of Christ disappearing into the clouds while their prints still mark the rock they have just quitted. Finally, the Holy Ghost is shown descending in conventional rays from a pleated cloud.

Such precise symbols seem very remote from the vague imagery of modern artists, who will probably pity the primitive simplicity of the carvers. Yet might they not more aptly envy the age in which the greatest drama of all time could be intelligibly expressed by a few symbols within the convention of architectural form, and when men were ready to enrich the impression which they received from any work of art by as wide a range of associated ideas as lay within the intellectual capacity of each individual?

In our reaction of abstract or symbolical art, the problem which confronts us to-day is that of bridging the gulf between the artist and the public. When we find artists who are ready to achieve such analytical understanding of their own aims that they can formulate the alphabet of their new language in intelligible terms, and a public honest enough not to condemn what it does not understand, adventurous enough to explore the almost forgotten, surrealist world of the imagination, then, and not till then, shall both artist and patron be able to play their ideal roles in the creation of fresh beauty. In the meantime, we may profitably consider the strange paradox, that the widest range of abstract qualities and sublime themes was expressed in forms which, while ignoring zoology, anatomy and perspective, retained an artistic reality at a time when every form was expected to convey a lesson even to the most illiterate beholder.

M. D. ANDERSON



Panels from Cornish bench-ends (top left to top right, bottom left to bottom right): Launcells, Poughill, Kilkhampton, Kilkhampton, Poughill, Launcells, Poughill, Poughill. The vignettes are from a misericord at Ely Cathedral (stag) and from the Bishop's Stall at Ripon (elephant).

Amongst the matters of great issue which at the present time occupy the energies of the physical planner it is natural that the finer architectural values should not occupy a large place. Yet planning, on however grandiose a scale, has one simple general objective: to find a cure for the various disasters of contemporary life by providing for every kind of individual an ampler environment. Abstract planning alone cannot provide this cure since in one's reactions to one's background points of detail play a part at least as large as the more general issues of amenity or convenience, and on points of detail there is room for wide divergence within the same plan. There comes a point at which whoever would create a more sympathetic environment must leave making plans and get to close quarters with the arrangement on the ground of real objects that can be leant against or walked around. In the last resort it is their design, and, still more, their interrelationship, which largely determines the individual's satisfaction or otherwise with his surroundings.

We are speaking, of course, of visual relationships. In the past when the impact of fresh ideas was slow and there was ample time to digest them, men were masters of visual effect. A patch of cobbles, a ramped pavement, a row of posts, such things were intuitively submitted to the adaptations and compromises which gave them the quality of fitting into their environment, the quality that has in the past been so characteristic of the English scene. The craftsmen who created these effects may well have been unconscious of their own subtlety but they were able to produce seemingly inevitable relationships between object and object, beside which our own stereotyped effects seem wonderfully arid. Yet the planning idea, unless it can be realized in the form of a sociable and humane arrangement of things, is simply redundant, and ought to be written off as a nuisance. It is the suspicion that those who go all out for planning in a big way are merely occupied in sacrificing the subtle architectural relations of the visible past (or present) in the cause of a theoretical uniformity known as "town planning" or "civic development," that puts many decent people, including architects, against the idea of physical reconstruction.

Large-scale planning, however, is not really irreconcilable with the study of its detailed effects; in fact one is obviously the natural complement of the other, the distinction being largely that between town planner and architect. None the less, neither the town planner nor the architect—nor for that matter the landscape architect—normally carry out quite such functions as those explored in Mr. Manasseh's and Mr. Busás's notes on Changes of Level. They are an attempt to rediscover the architectural nuance and to reconsecrate it to the modern ideal which consists in trying to realize what is architectural in the relations between one object and another irrespective of whether or not the object in question is technically "architecture."

Changes of level

1 *Two parallel planes and the interplay of two differences of level, that between the tree-lined road and the houses, and that between the houses in the front and further back. The houses step up a very gentle slope towards the background of our picture, and the grass bank emphasizes this subtle ascent by placing it on a platform (Burford).*

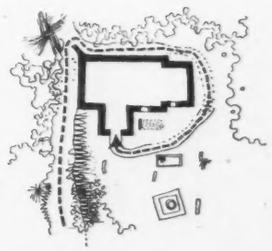
2 *Still only two strata, but a more complicated counterpoint. The road goes slightly up to the right, the grass bank in front of the cottage just a little more perceptibly to the left. The village builder has with unerring instinct given architectural expression to these conditions of his site. Note how the pent-roof on the right stresses the fall of the grass bank, and how the garden wall first juts forward and then curves down, gracefully leading down from the level of the house towards that of the road (Scrooby).*

a

b

c

3 *A still more complicated sighting problem, counterpoint in three voices this time, no longer in two. The planes are here not parallel; the third dimension enters. The street in the front climbs up to the right, and is met at the almshouse corner by two other streets. We perceive the falling off of these streets towards the background, while we see at the same time the climb of the front street. There is much drama in this corner, and the builder has accentuated it by genuine architectural means. The straight lines of the balustrade make us feel the fall of the levels. The house stands out like a rock surrounded by waves. The powerful pointed arch adds still more strength. Remove it* (a), *and all goes flabby. Remove the buildings in the background* (b) *and the dip in the street becomes mute. Smooth out all the differences of level* (c), *and you are left with just another corner (Stamford).*



4 *The previous sighting problems could be taken in at one glance. Here time enters as a fourth dimension. The path passes the little church on the left. From where we stand, we may with expectant pleasure compare our level with that of the church door and churchyard down below, but only by following the path as it curls round the building can the course of this change of level be experienced to the full. But there is in the pre-view of one's destination already a keen delight, and it is increased by the fact that one could so easily cheat and cut straight down the bank (Culbone).*

LEONARD MANASSEH AND STEFAN BUZÁS

1

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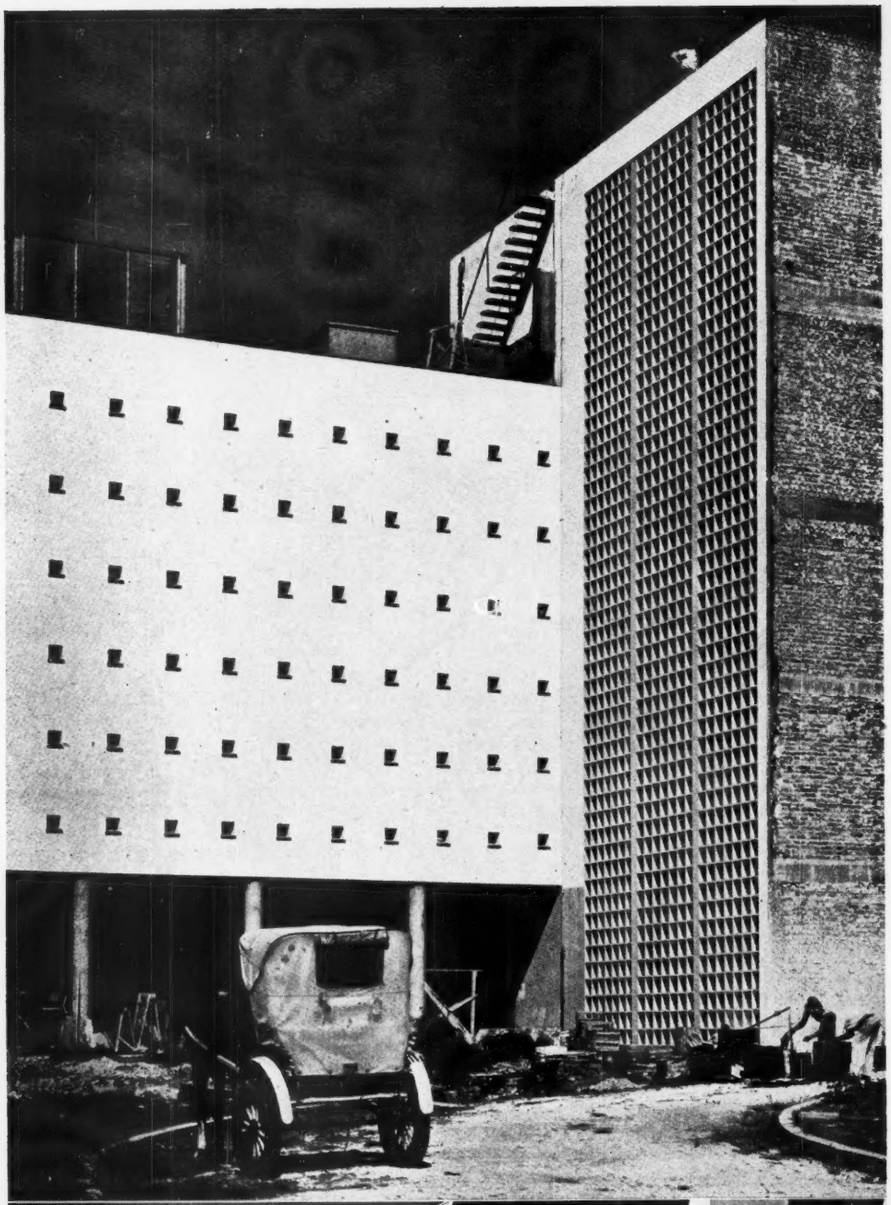

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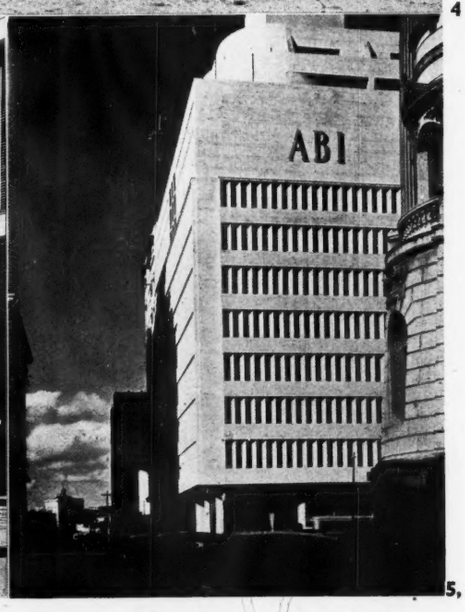

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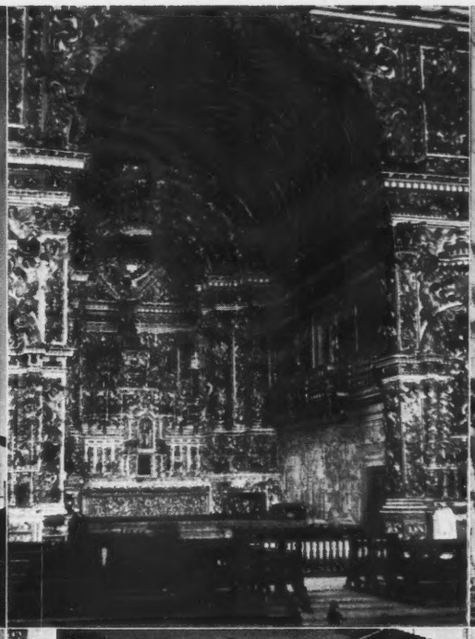
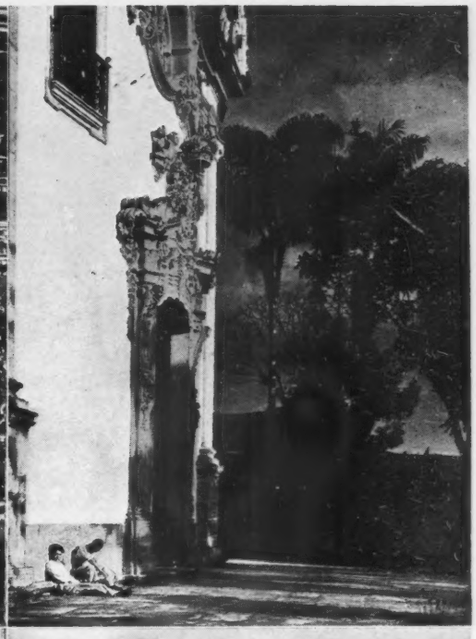
A NATIONAL VARIETY OF AN INTERNATIONAL STYLE. Brazil woke up to Western art when Portuguese Jesuits introduced the glittering exuberance of the Baroque. Nowhere did it flourish as richly as in South America. The churches of such monasteries as Ouro Preto (Black Gold), by M. F. Lisbôa (1760), **11** *and* **12**, *St. Francis at Salvador of 1715,* **9**, *or Guia,* **3**, *show it at its most splendid : luxurious curves, an inextricable filigree of surface decoration, and sculpture of rustic directness,* **1** *and* **2**. *The black St. Iphigenia is at Ouro Preto, the angel at St. Michael's, Rio Grande do Sul. Now when the modern style in architecture was brought in from abroad in very much the same way as the Baroque before, the same native qualities got hold of it, and made something of it, as national and as fantastic as Brazilian Baroque had been. Le Corbusier was asked to advise a group of Brazilian architects on the new building for the ministries of education and health,* **7**. *He may even have been the first to suggest the extensive use of the* brise-soleil *or sun-blind. But the use made of it by the Brazilians achieves surfaces within the limitations of the twentieth century idiom just as flickeringly alive as the stucco and woodwork at Salvador,* **9**. *The sun-blind is by no means a motif of uniform effect either. The architects of the ministry building, L. Costa, O. Niemeyer, A. Reidy, C. Leão, J. Moreira and E. Vasconcelos, have stressed its quick and ever-changing rhythm, while Marcelo and Milton Roberto in the Brazilian Press Association,* **6**, *have endowed it with solidity and monumentality. Very original is the contrast between the close-meshed concrete trellis and the small corridor windows (on the north, the sun side) of a laboratory for preparing a snake bite serum, by A. V. Brazil and A. Marinho,* **4**. *The fanciful concrete trellis of the Brazilian Pavilion at the New York fair of 1939, by L. Costa and O. Niemeyer,* **8**, *is set against a curved ramp as springy as that of the Baroque fountain at Ouro Preto,* **10**. *The outside spiral staircase (seaplane station, Rio de Janeiro, by A. C. Lima,* **5**), *may be an international motif, but it assumes a new Baroque eloquence under the sky of South America.* **1-12** *are photographs by G. E. Kidder Smith. They are illustrated in* Brazil Builds, *a book reviewed on the following page.*





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BOOKS

The Brazilian contribution

BRAZIL BUILDS: Architecture New and Old, 1652-1942. By Philip L. Goodwin. Photographs by G. E. Kidder Smith. Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1943. $5.00.

IT seems that Le Corbusier has conquered Brazil. He was consulted about the new Ministry of Education building at Rio, **7**, finished in 1942, and if the pictures in this book do not lie, it is a splendid building; an elegant prism-on-edge, one side all window, with rapier-sharp arrises where it joins the narrow windowless return-walls. This and other buildings in the same spirit by Brazilian architects have sprung up quickly and naturally and nobody seems to find them very shocking or un-Brazilian or otherwise objectionable. To look through this book is to be reminded under what peculiar psychological conditions modern architecture labours here in England, where a few private houses and a playground for quaint birds are almost the only representatives of advanced architectural thought. Senior civil servants would certainly commit hari-kari rather than be seen entering a Board of Education building remotely resembling Rio's.

Why? Is the answer climate or tradition? Probably climate. A Brazilian sky tempts men to build fantastically, and the fantasy of functionalism succeeds quite naturally the fantasy of Baroque. The old church-architects of Brazil dared everything, coiled their pediments into tortuous arabesques, camouflaged their doorways under architectural compositions precariously arrested in a process of deliquescence. Much of it is superbly done and reaches that dangerous and thrilling pitch which is the essence not only of this kind of Baroque but also, in other terms, the Le Corbusier kind of functionalism.

The book is delightful in every way, with a lively text by Mr. Goodwin and brilliant photographs by Mr. Kidder Smith. The colour photograph of the interior of a church at Salvador, **9**, with gold ornament, writhing over everything like some fantastic ivy, is a regular knock-out.

JOHN SUMMERSON

Chelsea in the blitz

RECORDING RUIN. By A. S. G. Butler. Constable. 7s. 6d.

THIS is an engaging book. The author, better known to many of us in other capacities, is employed by the Chelsea authorities to make a record of bomb-damage throughout the borough. It would seem a rather gruesome occupation and antipathetic to one who has devoted most of his life to the happy creation and appreciation of beautiful things. But, keenly as he feels the senselessness and brutality of all the destruction, there runs through all his descriptions of his daily round an undertone of wry gaiety—not a making the best of a bad job, but a natural welling up of sympathy with all the odd varieties of buildings and persons he meets with on his way. There is a smile and a shrug over his own career twice cut short by war; a half-wistful recalling of old wanderings in a Europe still undisciplined: a pity for things, even ugly things, put together with care and trouble, smashed in a second. As he stands on the heat-softened leads of St. Paul's, with all the City on fire around him; or hears things plop softly into the knee-deep water of a shuttered and solitary basement; or lying in a pool half-choked by smoke aims his stirrup-pump; or helps Mr. Fleming fry his bacon in the little house where the tragedy of sudden death is so starkly brutal; all the time he is saying quietly to himself (and us), "Really, what nonsense these dictators are with all their hot air and attitudes; bestial, may be, and destructive as a pox, but not portents; just grubby children foully misbehaving and making a mess of the world we knew."

In plan the book is a series of records of his daily experiences for one or two days in each month of 1941, from January to August; now and again a digression away from it all is occasioned by some old letters or personal records turned over by chance. There are no chapter headings; but if I may be allowed to invent a few (they will be, perhaps, more melodramatic than the tone of the book warrants), the list will give a fair idea of the diversity of matter in these 150 pages; somewhat thus, it may be—Introducing Chelsea; The House with the Frozen Staircase; Guard at St. Paul's; Salute to Walter Berry; Europe without Order; Old Maids Undismayed; Week-ends with Lord Curzon; The Aliens in the Attic; The General Stays Put; The Burglar's Apprentice; and so on.

Having the right of entry to every house in the borough, he has not only his adventures in the many varieties of shattered homes to share with us, but introduces us to a host of anonymous friends. Perhaps when the war is ended he will invite them all to tea in his walled garden (that groggy wall may have collapsed at last); gathered round the hibiscus they will no doubt at last reveal their names and a little grimly exchange reminiscences of their diverse ruin—the lady at No. 21, the lady who was brushing trousers, the man with the silken underwear, the two old ladies each with a faithful maid, the seventeen Belgians, the general, the mysterious aliens, and the many stout-hearted, unafraid charwomen and caretakers, to whom all Hitler's devilry meant just so much more work for dustpan and scrubbing brush. But with peace

that miasma of cold aloofness fogs us again. I fear they will never thus foregather.

The few illustrations are competent, but lack the savour of the text. They would seem to give rather the municipal view of the work of a ruin-recorder than the insouciant author's own reaction to his daily adventures.

WILLIAM G. NEWTON

Mr. Betjeman remembers England

ENGLISH CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS. By John Betjeman. Britain in Pictures series. Collins. 4s. 6d.

THIS is a nostalgic book. Mr. Betjeman writes from abroad, homesick for the charm of English towns with the mingled ugliness and beauty that give to each of them its separate individuality, for, as he says, " no English town is typical." This addition to the " Britain in Pictures " series will be read with delight by those who share Mr. Betjeman's intimate understanding of our cities. He is an artist in the use of the trifle, perfectly described, as the key to unlock wide memories. The tin name-plate on a red brick villa in Station Row, the revolving stand of picture postcards from which the wise traveller gleans useful local knowledge, have their place in this book and evoke, in those whom war has exiled or immobilised, ruefully happy recollections of first arrivals. With an admirable economy of words he recalls the familiar beauties of Salisbury and Bath, the University towns and the Cotswold villages, knowing that our memories will fill in the outlines, and concentrates his descriptive powers on those attractions which we are more likely to have overlooked. We shall enlarge the scope of our enjoyment when we are free to wander again.

The foreigner who seeks a general impression of English towns may be discouraged by finding more text devoted to Nonconformist Chapels and the backs of old houses whose fronts have been mutilated in the name of modernity, than to the masterpieces of medieval or Renaissance architecture; the sociologist may regret that the tribute paid to the romance of industry does not include a reference to the experiments in building industrial towns in which beauty will be less hard to find. But both the far past and the future of architecture already attract their full due of attention, while there is grave danger that much good building, intensely characteristic of England, may be swept away unnoticed in post-war reconstruction. We must be grateful to Mr. Betjeman for stimulating interest in a phase of English architecture which is not yet old enough to be scheduled, either in official lists or in the minds of the general public, as worthy of interest and preservation, and we cannot fail to be grateful for his skilful evocation of those pleasures which even war has not placed entirely beyond our reach.

M. D. ANDERSON

Arrows of Desire

CAN OUR CITIES SURVIVE ? By J. L. Sert and CIAM. Howard University Press and Oxford University Press. 259 pp. $5.00.

AMONG the economic and spiritual consequences of the first world war (though its origins are older) was functionalist architecture, a way of design which tried to evoke pleasure through direct expression of use and structure in building rather than through disguise or reminiscence. Confronted by opposition from a wide variety of tastes and interests, the leading spirits in this movement drew together. In 1928, at La Sarraz in Switzerland, the International Congresses for Modern Architecture (Congrés Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne, CIAM) were born.

First a study was made of minimum dwellings, but it was soon realized that the new principles could not be properly applied to single buildings or blocks intruding upon a traditional pattern of building, and the problem first of the neighbourhood unit, then of city planning as a whole, came to be considered.

In 1932 the several national groups, in England the MARS Group, were invited to prepare analytical plans of cities to a uniform scale and with standard symbols. In the following year the fourth congress was held on board the S.S. Patris on a voyage to and from Athens, and the plans were exhibited and discussed in that city.

The result was the Town Planning Chart (which in Anglo-American might more properly be called a Charter, or on the Continent a Manifesto). Discussion and elaboration continued until the outbreak of the second world war.

Now one of the members of CIAM, José Luis Sert, sometime of Barcelona, has published a much expanded and improved version in the United States. The chart itself is relegated to an appendix. As might be expected, a close study of thirty-three different cities yielded little more than a negative summary of their common shortcomings. Not that positive intentions were lacking; Le Corbusier and others had already started publishing them. Mr. Sert has worked up the whole argument, adding some valuable American material, into a handsome and well-written book, with the liveliest illustrations on every other page. It would be of absorbing interest at any time; to those who have seen so many of their cities destroyed and look forward to the opportunity of rebuilding them better, it should prove an inspiration.

It must not be thought, however, from this history of its origin that the work deals merely with architectural possibilities. On the contrary, it approaches the subject from a strictly functional point of view.

The city is conceived as having four main functions: Dwelling, Recreation, Work and Transport. Social Services (educational and medical) might have been logically coupled with Recreation, but when it comes to map-making they are more closely related to Dwelling, and they are here treated, perhaps rather cursorily, as part of the first function.

In each case the inadequacy of our present cities is forcibly stated. The slums, the lack of open spaces, the haphazard growth of industry, the congested traffic routes, these are urban diseases often talked about, but seldom so well analysed and traced to their true causes. The citing of examples from so many different countries adds strength to the argument.

The statistical material, too, is well chosen and well presented, especially in some of the graphs, though a clear comparison which might have been made between the figures for the thirty-three cities is lacking. Perhaps there is no common basis in the material available; if that is so, it is high time standard methods were introduced. The Dutch Group affiliated to CIAM drew up, under the leadership of van Eesteren, town-planner of Amsterdam, an admirable standard set of map symbols (shortly to be published); they or some other group might be persuaded in due course to standardize the collection and presentation of urban statistics.

The detailed prescriptions for the troubles of our cities must vary in each individual case; Mr. Sert and CIAM can do no more than lay down the general principles of cure.

In the first place, if cities are to survive, high densities of population must be accepted. Tall buildings widely spaced and properly orientated provide a means of housing large sections of the populace that has hardly yet been tried on an adequate scale. (A clear distinction, often absent in the lay mind, must be preserved between high density and overcrowding. Real overcrowding, that is too many people in one room, remains an economic and not a technical question.) This kind of building releases land for recreation too, just where it is most needed and in a way that no other could.

As for work, industrial zoning and sufficient but not excessive distance between work and dwelling, these are accepted principles, though little enough is done to put them into practice. The transport problem, however, is seldom even thought about in its true proportions. Here differentiation of function—through-traffic from local, fast traffic from slow—and the reduction or elimination of crossings on fast through-routes are the most immediate necessities in all big cities.

These are only a few of the principal measures proposed. To all of them modern technical developments, especially in pure structural design, can contribute, for city-planning has become a three-dimensional problem. It only requires energy and vision for the problem to be solved.

But Mr. Sert is not building castles in Spain. He sees the difficulties clearly enough. If there is any under-estimation, it is perhaps that of the opposition to planning as such. In the event this may prove the most serious obstruction of all.

Why should we all be regimented into great parallel blocks of flats ? If this is the price of survival, let the cities die. There is certainly something about many of the schemes illustrated that must appear forbidding to the individualist, even to the socially conscious individualist who believes in the development of human personality. He can be told, of course, that in such large-scale projects achievement is likely to fall far short of intention, if only through the unpredictability of social change, and that unless we aim at something which looks on paper like over-planning, we shall never get anything in bricks and mortar—concrete, steel and glass—that feels like planning at all.

The objection, however, may lie deeper than that. Mr. Sert almost takes it for granted that cities should survive, though he does refer to their cultural value by way of supporting argument. In dealing with his opponents, he confines them to two schools of thought. One says: " The city is capable of looking after itself, and will do so without any of your drastic remedies." The other says: " The city is a grand thing, but it is too far gone now, and there is really nothing you can do about it."

What of the man who says: " The city is no longer necessary; plough it under ? " He has a case. Mr. Sert does less than justice to the significance of restored road transport. The steam engine may have concentrated populations through the need for collective travel and fixed stops. The petrol engine went far to reverse the process. Electric power and wireless encouraged dispersal. Modern war insists upon it. (Post-war agricultural policy, at least in this country, may add further support.) One day the city may exist only for higher cultural and ritual purposes. Would anyone live in a city now if he didn't have to ?

These are high-flying speculations. In fact it is reasonable to assume that there will be at least one " turnover " of cities before such tendencies begin to make a real difference. (We shall need our Corbusiers before we get to our Frank Lloyd Wrights.) And if the city must survive even that long, Mr. Sert can return to his two first critics and prove to them that something should and can be done.

We have examples before us of large-scale planning successfully carried out. Let us not forget, however, that these schemes have not involved the cores of established cities. Property speculators and other " vested interests " are lined up here in force, and there is, as Mr. Sert says, an " absence of a collective spirit capable of organizing community life to the lasting advantage of the many instead of to the immediate profit of the few." Perhaps that is the real limit to the growth of cities; not the capacity for strap-hanging, but the capacity for collective action.

This question of collective action is a difficult one where city planning is concerned, not only on account of disputed ends or disputed means to agreed ends, but on account of that most serious deterrent, apathy. Except to the imaginative, physical environment is something that must be taken for granted to make life tolerable; if it is not a very good environment, to become too conscious of it, to write to your M.P. about it, to attend demonstrations and sign petitions, may well make matters worse. " Splendid," says the agitator, " stimulate dissatisfaction." But in practice the common man would rather put up with what he has than increase his ill-being for the sake of some doubtful future improvement which he cannot imagine and may not live to see. So the long-term planner must expect no more than a mild sympathy from the mass of his short-term fellow citizens.

But there are some, the " enlightened laymen," who will take a livelier interest. And what could provide them with a better start than this book ?

GODFREY SAMUEL

ANTHOLOGY

A friar's travels in Arakan

At Urrittaung the Portuguese envoys were inside the rice plain of Arakan, a considerable area, eighty miles, say, from north to south and standing back some sixty miles from the sea. Arakan was then an Indian land, its inhabitants being Indians similar to those resident in Bengal. It was noted for a colossal statue of Buddha known as the Mahamuni, which was reputed to be of great antiquity.

With the change of the moon two days after the arrival of the travellers, the weather cleared and at dawn they made a start for the Mahamuni. The great image was situated on the top of a little hill about forty miles north-west of Mrauk-u. The journey could be made wholly by boat. Manrique, the Captain, their servants, their luggage with the presents, were accommodated on three fast naval vessels under the command of the Arakanese staff officer. The route was up the Kaladan river and later into a creek. By the end of the first day the banks became lined with trees, so tall and spreading that they seemed to meet overhead, a jungle landscape with monkeys swinging on the boughs, peacocks streaming across, and an occasional rhinoceros in the undergrowth. On the second day they came to a populated rice plain dotted with villages. Halting at one of these for breakfast, they were astonished at the quantity and cheapness of provisions. For a rupee or half a piece of eight, say two shillings, it was possible to buy thirty good fowls, and eggs were selling at about a penny a dozen.

That afternoon they rowed up the Thye-ma-nadi and when about three miles from Mahamuni were obliged to stop because the river was blocked with houseboats. The staff officer explained. When the King and Court went on a state tour through the country, particularly when they visited the Mahamuni, they did not go in galleys or barges, but, far more comfortably, in bamboo pavilions built upon rafts. The pavilions were large and fitted with all the conveniences of the day, the King's being a palace, not only in name but in fact, a miniature of his palace at Mrauk-u, with its numerous rooms for the consorts and suite. The rafts bearing the pavilions could not have been propelled by oars at any pace, but this was unnecessary, for all the rivers and creeks were tidal. Fifteen or twenty miles would be covered in a tide, an ample distance for a stately progress. It was with such houseboats and rafts that the river was blocked, though, said the staff officer, the King himself and his household were ashore, as he possessed a land palace at Mahamuni.

The Mahamuni precincts occupied the whole hill, both the top and the sides. There were three walled enclosures, the lowest wall at the base, the second thirty feet up, and the third, enclosing the levelled summit, again thirty feet higher. Covered step-ways mounting from gates at the four cardinal points led to the shrine, the centre of the innermost enclosure. In the first enclosure were a library and a reservoir fed by a perennial spring. In the second were twelve figures of Hindu deities dating from the pre-Arakanese period. More important was a great banyan tree, under which the Blessed One had rested while superintending—as legend had it—the casting of his statue. In the third enclosure, besides the shrine, was a bell, the Yattara bell, one of the strangest bells in the world, for inscribed on it were spells and astrological tables, which gave minute instructions how, when, and in what circumstances it should be struck, if the country were invaded. The notes, provided the particularities of the tables were complied with, would operate to put the invaders to flight by deranging their astrological chart and so placing them in jeopardy.

In the exact centre of this top enclosure was the shrine. The original had been destroyed at the time of the Mongolian or Arakanese invasion of A.D. 967 and had been rebuilt during the period when the country was a feudatory of the Pagan kings of Burma. In Manrique's time it must therefore have resembled a small pagoda of the Pagan dynasty type, a structure with massive brick or stone walls enclosing a chamber and surmounted by a spire. In the chamber was the famous image, a bronze over ten feet high representing the Buddha dressed as a monk and seated on a throne, his legs folded under him, his left hand open on his lap, the right touching earth with the tips of the fingers, a symbolical gesture denoting active compassion for mankind. The orthodox Buddhist view is that it is one of five contemporary likenesses of the Master, two of these being in India and two in Paradise.

MAURICE COLLIS

(*The Land of the Great Image, Faber and Faber*, 1943)

MARGINALIA

This month's Anthology

Mr. Collis's new book is an account of the experiences of the Augustinian Friar Sebastiao Manrique in Arakan. He was sent by his order to Bengal in 1628 which, at that time, was in Portuguese hands. From there he travelled on a special mission to Arakan, a province of the present Burma that has been much in the news during the last few months. He wrote down his *Travels* after his return to Europe in 1643. Mr. Collis, when exploring in 1924 the places which Friar Manrique had visited, resolved to describe his *Travels*. They had then not yet been published in book form in the English language. And although there is now in existence an English edition edited by the Hakluyt Society in 1927, Mr. Collis's book will be of great use and interest. Scholars may prefer to go to the Hakluyt volume, the layman—and who is not a layman when it comes to monastic life in India in the seventeenth century and the relations between native courts and European missionary-trader-conquerors—will find Mr. Collis's book exceedingly well written, steering clear with great skill of the dry sands of academic learning as well as the shallow waters of semi-historical fiction.

Journals for the Forces

The Association of Building Technicians (formerly A.A.S.T.A.), repeats its appeals for architectural magazines to be sent to the Forces. The scheme has now been extended to include parcels to prisoners of war. The collecting address is still 113, High Holborn, London, W.C.1 (Forces Committee).

Avebury for the Nation

Sir Richard Acland's gift of 17,000 acres to the National Trust was announced in last month's *Marginalia*. Meanwhile the Trust has made another highly important acquisition: the Avebury site, one of the paramount Bronze Age sites of Europe. It has been famous for centuries, but systematic research began only when the then owner, Mr. A. Keiller, decided on excavations at his own expense. That was in 1925. They were carried out in co-operation with the Office of Works. Since then the site has changed its appearance considerably. The megaliths have, wherever possible, been set up again in their original positions. Broken megaliths have been fitted together. Concrete pillars mark the places of megaliths which have disappeared during the period when Avebury was a favourite quarrying site.

The purchase was made possible by gifts from Mr. I. D. Margary and the Pilgrim Trust.

The Present discovers the Past

The London Museum is showing a CEMA exhibition which informs in a clear and concise if not glamorous way, of the methods and results of British archæology. The first part: The Old and the New, seems of doubtful value. There is a danger in such facile comparisons between Roman and Modern. They tend to make people discover superficial similarities and overlook basic differences. What should be encouraged in books and exhibitions is the attitude: This is what the Romans did, everything of a piece within their civilization. Now what must we do?

The other sections of the exhibitions deal with sites and finds, methods of excavation and the presentation of completed excavations to the public. The most thrilling photos are no doubt those of discoveries by air photography. Crop marks can reveal roads, villages, camps, in fact everything that has once been built upon. Rumour has it that the R.A.F. are making valuable contributions to German archæology all the time by means of their reconnaisance photos.

Correspondence

The Editor
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
Sir,

The brilliantly illustrated article of Mr. G. Loukomski in your January number brings forward a most interesting point of the relation between his work and that of his English colleagues. I would like, however, to make some additions as a few data have been established after Mr. Loukomski left Russia in 1919, or was it in 1918?

Not much is known, indeed, of Cameron's early life, yet the perusal of Catherine's letters indicates that being "a close relation" or "a

nephew to Miss Jenny Cameron" (Sbornik, v. 23, pp. 93, 230), Charles Cameron belonged to that branch of the Clan Cameron which was involved in the events of '45. The history of the Camerons confirms this and leads to the supposition that Charles must have been one of the younger children of Dr. Archibald Cameron, executed in London in 1753 as a Jacobite rebel. The lack of exact information of the date of his birth is, probably, due to the fact that the home of the Camerons was burnt down and they had to take refuge on the Continent. Born about 1740, Charles in 1745 was more in need of a nurse than of a position "attached to the Roman court of the Young Pretender"; besides, Prince Charles had no court at this time and, according to Catherine, Cameron was, indeed, brought up in the house of James, the so-called "Old Pretender."

The date of Cameron's death is known. He died in St. Petersburg in the spring of 1812, his obituary being published by the *Gentleman's Magazine* in June, 1812. His widow died also in St. Petersburg in 1817, her obituary, too, being published by the same magazine. It would be most interesting to know what grounds Mr. Loukomski has for assuming that Cameron had visited England between 1799-1801.

The problem of identification of the portrait of Hunter seems also open to question. The drawing that the supposed Cameron holds in his hand is not any of the plans in his book; its headline "... *of the Baths*" does not coincide with the title of Cameron's publication "The Baths *of the Romans*"; the attire has no connection with any Russian dress of any period, but looks more like that of many figures in the drawings of Robert Adam and Clérisseau in "The Palace of Diocletian," especially those on Plate 20. The man has no resemblance to any of the Camerons, and the bust in the background does not seem to be that of Lord Bute. What is, then, the ground for this claim? It would also be good to know the actual date of the portrait, as 1773 leads one to suspect that Cameron possessed a gift of foresight, ordering a "Russian attire" beforehand, and 1778 would not leave him margin enough to have his portrait painted, as he was in Russia already in the early spring of this year.

It was, indeed, in 1778 that Cameron arrived in Russia and not in 1779, as assumed by Mr. Loukomski. In her letters to Grimm on the 16th of May and 21st of June, 1778 (Sbornik, v. 23, pp. 56, 58), Catherine speaks of the work of her English architect. This date is of some importance because it establishes that Cameron had already decorated some rooms for the Empress, in the new classical style, before the arrival of Clérisseau's drawings in Russia in 1780.

I was astonished also to read that according to Mr. Loukomski, Cameron, in his drawings, "cared little for accuracy," and was "negligent in manner," and that they are mostly executed in blue and brown. As far as I can recollect, all the drawings of Cameron I knew during my four years in the archives of Pavlovsk, as well as those in Tsarskoe and the Hermitage, were precise in outline and of very light colours, mostly light pink and very light buff. Memory can play treacherous tricks!

Further questions are raised by the identification of Cameron's work itself. He did not stay in Pavlovsk to complete his commission, but was superseded in 1787 by Brenna who, in 1796, was joined by Voronikhin. These are well-known facts and are to be found in every guide book. Accordingly, important qualifications must be made in the wholesale attributions of Mr. Loukomski. In the general plan of Pavlovsk, only the central block and the quadrant wings are by Cameron, the rest is Brenna. Both the galleries illustrated and admired by Mr. Loukomski are also by Brenna, but they do not belong to Pavlovsk. They are parts of the palace of Gatchina. The "Cabinet de Toilette," damaged by the fire in 1803, was redecorated by Brenna and Voronikhin. The "Egyptian Hall" (Loukomski, *Apollo*, September, 1942), is by Voronikhin, and he was also responsible for the ceiling and a number of sculptured details in the "Grecian Hall." In this hall, moreover, the columns, supposed by Mr. Loukomski to be of "carved porphyry," are in stucco imitating verd'antico.

It is impossible to give a summary account of Mr. Loukomski's attributions of furniture; I would like to remark that almost all the examples reproduced in his previous articles are works of French ebenists and it has yet to be proved that they employed Cameron. It may be supposed that Cameron gave some designs for furniture, but they are not those mentioned by Mr. Loukomski. They are the suites for the Grecian Hall, the Rotunda and the Halls of War and Peace.

Yours faithfully,
T. TCHERNAVIN

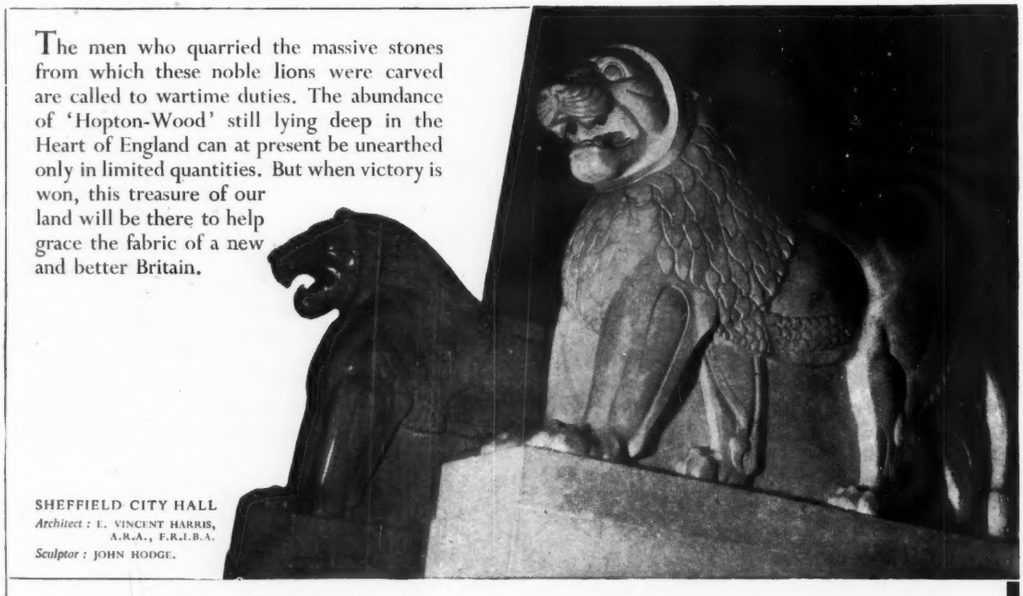
Below is Mr. Loukomski's reply to this letter.

The Editor
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
Sir,

I have read with great interest Mrs. Tchernavin's letter and am very grateful for some of her remarks.

The scope of my article, however, did not permit of lengthy comments on controversial points. Nor does indeed this letter. Both your readers and Mrs. Tchernavin will find exhaustive replies to the points raised in my illustrated monograph on Cameron which is now in prepara-

[continued on page xlii



The men who quarried the massive stones from which these noble lions were carved are called to wartime duties. The abundance of 'Hopton-Wood' still lying deep in the Heart of England can at present be unearthed only in limited quantities. But when victory is won, this treasure of our land will be there to help grace the fabric of a new and better Britain.

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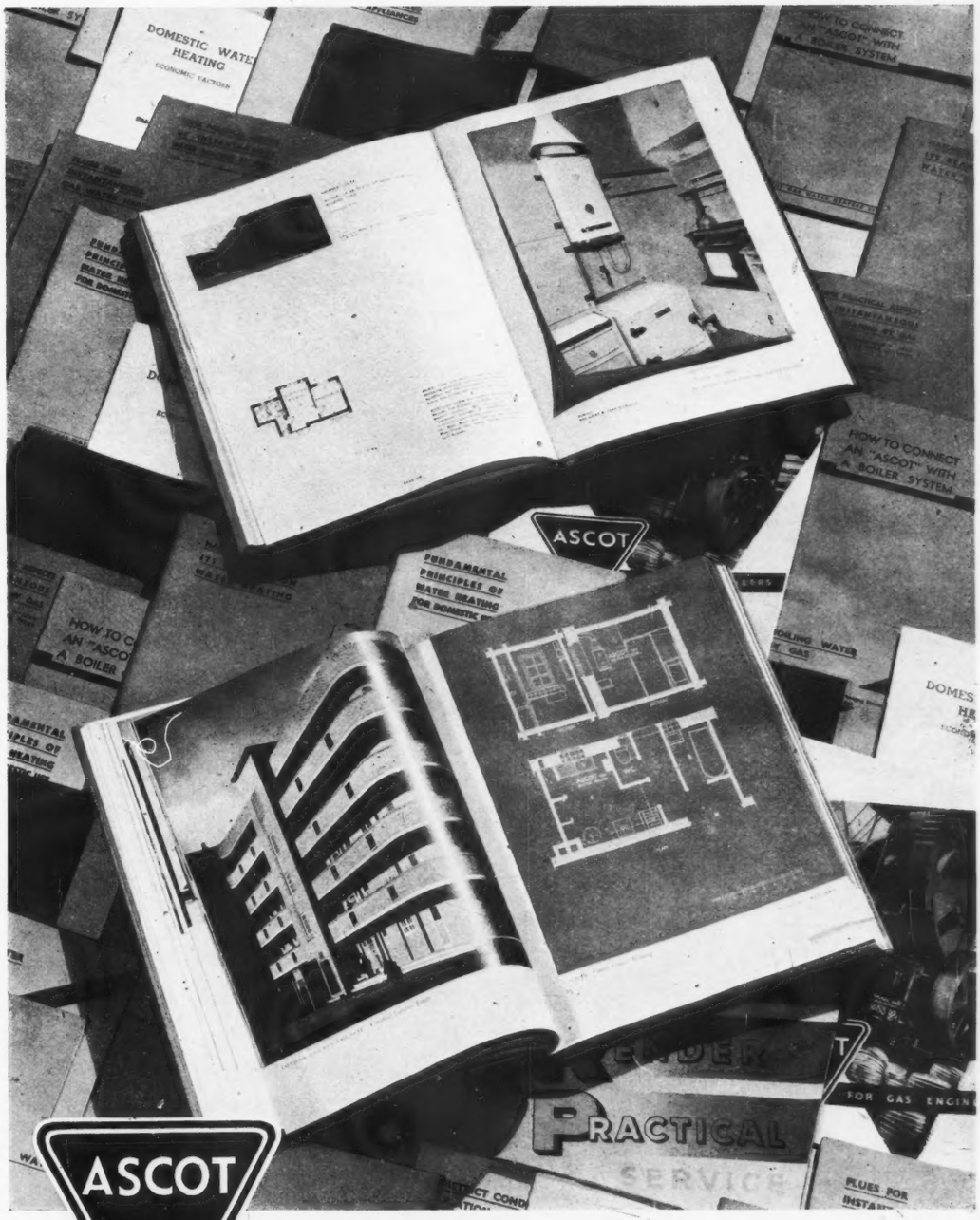

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tion for early publication. All the same, it may be of interest to say already now a few words in answer to her criticism.

I am afraid I do not agree with her opinion concerning the character or the manner of execution of some of Cameron's drawings. An architect and painter myself, I find support for my views in those of an old friend and colleague of mine, himself also an architect and a painter, Mr. V. N. Taleporovsky, who from 1918 onwards was curator of Pavlovsk Palace, and has described (and published in 1923) all the Cameron drawings which were at Pavlovsk, in the archives, at the Hermitage, the Institute of Engineering and in Moscow.

The argument as to the authorship of some of the parts of Pavlovsk Palace is not new. It dates back to 1911-12, when *Starya Gody* published the opposing views of two Russian authorities, V. J. Kourbatov and I. E. Grabar. Grabar, for instance, maintained that the Egyptian Hall was Cameron's, but Kourbatov, while agreeing that it was built by Cameron, suggested that it had been altered by Voronikhin (Pavlovsk, 1912, second edition of the *Eugenia Sty*, p. 230). Arguments or controversies of this kind are very valuable, for they help to establish truth. But they must be based on both documentary evidence and artistic sensibility. A document alone, however authentic it may appear, or an attribution guided solely by criticism of style, can both be erroneous. Thus, for instance, the claim that Baturin, according to Grabar's *History of Russian Art*, was Rinaldi's, had to be given up, when I discovered in 1911 in the archives of Count Repnin the original plans signed by Cameron.

As to the Cameron portrait, I have seen and examined the original. The details and description were given me, with permission to reproduce the picture in my article, by the owner, Mr. Minlore.

Regarding the dates of Cameron's birth and death, these also are fully dealt with in my monograph. They could not in detail be embodied in the article. Hence apparent contradictions. The same applies to the other questions of attribution, except for one regrettable error to which I plead guilty. The plates of the two curved galleries, illustrated as at Pavlovsk, are in fact Brenna's work at the Gatchina Palace, of importance, of course, but only for the sake of comparison, just as some of my other illustrations (Adam, Rinaldi, Quarenghi).

Yours truly,

G. LOUKOMSKI

The Building Illustrated

SCHOOL

Architect : **Hugh Bennett**

Director of Education : **Arthur B. Mills**

Quantity Surveyors : **Hobson & Withington**

Clerks of Works : **A. E. Wallwork (preliminary trades), Noel B. Dant (general trades and all finishings)**

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